

Captain Michael A. Baroody, Commanding Officer
U.S. Coast Guard Sector Northern New England
259 High Street
South Portland, ME 04106-0007

Dear Captain Baroody,

July 6, 2017

The members of our association are formally requesting your review of our proposal for the adoption of a new Federal Anchorage Ground in Penobscot Bay, east of Rockland Harbor. The authority for such action is designated in Section 7 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of March 4, 1915, and codified in 33 CFR 109.05- Anchorage Grounds. Formal presentations regarding this proposal were made to the public at the Maine & New Hampshire Port Safety Forum #108 on December 14, 2016 in Portland, and again on March 22, 2017 at PSF #109 held in Belfast Maine. A summary of the proposal is listed in the minutes of those meetings, included with this letter.

The primary reason for this request is to safely accommodate the double-digit growth in cruise ship traffic which the State of Maine is experiencing. Twenty years ago, only a few dozen cruise ships were calling in State waters, and a “large” ship might have been 700’ in length. This season, we see Portland receiving 46 large cruise ships, and Bar Harbor is expected to receive over 130 such vessels. An “average” sized ship now is around 900’. The recent history of large cruise ships calling on Rockland started in 2009, with the arrival of the 962’ JEWEL OF THE SEAS on October 4th. This vessel used the long-established anchorage “A” within Rockland Harbor, but was only able to do so by using her Dynamic Positioning System (DP) while having her anchor down with a short-stay. Since that time several other large ships have visited Rockland, although not all have used the inner anchorage due to the limited swinging room available there.

Rockland’s “A” anchorage is approximately 2,200’ wide, with depths of as little as 26’ on its north and south boundaries, and depths of 30’ or less within the western half. There is about a 1,100’ radius available for a ship to swing through safely, with much of that swinging room being outside of the northeast side of the anchorage. With five shots of chain out, a 650’-700’ ship must be anchored very precisely and monitored very closely to stay within this safe anchorage circle.

While many of the newer cruise ships have a DP system available, some still do not. Further, those that do have DP capabilities may choose not to use them, due to the large volume of fuel that they consume when on DP mode, especially in windier conditions. This has led to the Pilots anchoring large cruise ships (and Navy vessels) in various locations outside of the Rockland harbor limits. In the past, we have anchored vessels off of Broad Cove in Owl’s Head; on the east side of the Rockland Breakwater, and east of Jameson Point on the north end of Rockland Harbor. Of those alternate locations, the Broad

Cove anchorage site has proven to be the most workable, safe location for a vessel to anchor when small vessels (tenders or other support craft) are expected to work alongside. The Broad Cove location has good holding ground, with modest current. Most importantly, the Broad Cove location gives an excellent lee from the prevailing sea and swell that rolls into Penobscot Bay when the wind direction is from east through south to west, and which is especially noticeable when low pressure systems pass offshore. Finally, the center of the Broad Cove anchorage is only ½ mile away from the east side of the existing anchorage area, making it the most direct route into the harbor for visiting vessels' tenders.

Despite its advantages, the Pilot's have been hindered in using this area as an alternate anchorage due to the location of a charted wreck very near the desired area of anchoring. The veracity of this charted wreck has long been in question, as no local sources had any information about it. Captain Adam Philbrook of the Penobscot Bay & River Pilots Association spoke with local fishermen and recreational scuba divers, none of whom had any knowledge or experience with a wreck in the charted location. In March of 2014, I asked the Maine Historic Preservation Commission if they had any documentation of a wreck in that area, and I included a chartlet of the area showing the wreck. The Commission responded promptly that they could find no record of such a wreck. A copy of that correspondence is included with this submission.

Finally, in the summer of 2016, a very comprehensive marine hydrographic survey of west Penobscot Bay was undertaken by a private surveying firm under the direction of NOAA. Thanks to the close cooperation of LCDR Meghan McGovern, the survey crew was informed of the importance of finding any evidence of this wreck, or lack thereof. On August 1st the survey team was able to positively "disprove" the presence of this wreck. LCDR McGovern immediately notified us of this finding, and a correction to the chart noting this wreck's removal was sent out on August 4th, 2016, in LNM 32/16.

With the wreck now removed from the proposed anchorage area, it is time to formally request that the Coast Guard establish an anchorage in the proposed location in order to facilitate the safe growth of the cruise ship industry in our State. Both Portland and Bar Harbor are pushing up against daily passenger limits for dates several years down the road, and turning ships away. Lacking a safe alternative, those vessels will in all likelihood bypass Maine entirely for a region where they know they can safely anchor or berth. While Bar Harbor has enjoyed double-digit growth in port calls from cruise ships, Rockland is still only getting a handful of vessels as the town tries to improve its infrastructure to accommodate the tender traffic which these vessels will bring. Updating the chart to include a designated anchorage area that larger cruise ships could safely use is part of the same effort to accommodate growth in the cruise ship trade. The ships will be coming: a recent CruiseMaine presentation at PSF #109 illustrated that by 2016, another 74 cruise ships will be joining the existing, international fleet. Due to geo-political issues, the Mediterranean and Asia are becoming less attractive for cruising, while the Northeast U.S. and Canada are becoming more attractive, and for a longer period throughout the year. Penobscot Bay already benefits by having an established Recommended Route

system for deep draft vessels. This traffic management scheme has been instrumental in decreasing conflicts between deep-draft commercial vessels and local fishermen by clearly illustrating the route travelled by the ships, as well as serving as a voyage-planning aid to ships that have never been to these waters before. Having a designated anchorage area off Broad Cove will continue that effort by clearly illustrating to all mariners where it is likely that these large ships will anchor.

The area of the proposed Broad Cove Anchorage is a quadrilateral polygon shape bounded by the following coordinates:

Position:	North Latitude:	West Longitude:
A	44° 06' 08"	69° 04' 32"
B	44° 06' 08"	69° 03' 27"
C	44° 05' 35"	69° 03' 39"
D	44° 05' 35"	69° 04' 18"

A chartlet showing the approximate location of these boundaries is shown on the next page. The chart of reference for this illustration is #13307. The shape and size of the anchorage would allow a 1,200' vessel to anchor using five shots of chain, and still stay within the bounds of the anchorage under most circumstances. Also note that the north side of the anchorage is located about one-tenth of a mile south of an east-west line drawn from the Rockland Breakwater, and that this border runs in an east to west direction. This will allow the scheduled Maine State Ferry Service and other vessel traffic entering or departing from Rockland to follow the normal east to west traffic flow out towards the PB buoy with only minor deviation from their regular route on occasions when ships are anchored there.

The members of our organization appreciate the opportunity to work with USCG Sector Northern New England in an effort to better prepare our waterway for the coming increase in cruise ship traffic. Not only are the numbers of cruise ships on the increase, but the average size of such vessels is on the increase as well. Having a larger, dedicated anchorage area will assist in keeping this traffic coming to our state, and will serve all mariners with a clear illustration of where such vessels will likely anchor

when coming to Penobscot Bay. We look forward to working with you to move this effort forward, and we are prepared to provide any further information which your staff may need to bring this effort to fruition. Thank you for your prompt attention to this proposal.

Respectfully,

Captain David Gelinas, President
Penobscot Bay & River Pilots Association

Cc: Mr. John Henshaw, Maine Port Authority
Mr. Matthew Ripley, Rockland Harbormaster
CDR Andrew Meyers, USCG Sector NNE
LCDR Meghan McGovern, NOAA
Mr. Matt Burns, Maine DOT/ CruiseMaine
COL. Jonathan Cornish, Maine Marine Patrol

