

Jones Act Carriers Continue to Provide a Critical Ocean Bridge for Puerto Rico, Ensuring Regular and Reliable Service During the Recovery Period

By November 6, there will be 25 Jones Act vessels delivering cargoes to the island efficiently and cost-effectively on a regular basis, including nine vessels that have entered the regular Puerto Rico trade since the hurricane. Jones Act carriers are also taking the following steps to help service the island:

- In addition to the 25 vessels in regular service, other Jones Act vessels are providing occasional service to the island and more Jones Act vessels are available to assist in the relief effort if additional capacity is needed.
- Some carriers have increased vessel speeds to decrease transit times.

As of October 27, these Jones Act vessels have delivered more than 20,000 container loads of cargo to Puerto Rico since Hurricane Maria made landfall, and approximately 6,000 containers remain on the dock (or on streets nearby) in Puerto Rico awaiting delivery. This is because:

- Containers are being used for on-island storage due to the lack of warehousing, damaged stores, refrigeration units without power, and other damaged infrastructure.
- Priority is being given to the distribution of FEMA cargoes and other critical relief cargoes such as generators, water, medicine, communications support equipment, and food.
- In addition to domestic sourced cargoes, foreign ships also carry goods to Puerto Rico from international points of origin.

Delayed delivery of cargoes from the mainland U.S. to Puerto Rico is the exception not the norm, and reports of major delays of cargo from the mainland are exaggerated.

- There are many reasons for the delays in delivery of cargo to Puerto Rico, including lack of storage facilities for the cargoes being delivered on the island and prioritization by the U.S. government of emergency cargoes over commercial cargoes.
- Moreover, there is cargo at the dock in Puerto Rico that has not been picked up for delivery; further deliveries of cargo to those same shippers would only further clog the distribution system in Puerto Rico.
- Any delays are also only temporary, as the introduction of additional Jones Act capacity will continue to help alleviate any delivery delays, provided the terminals in Puerto Rico can handle the additional throughput.

Repealing the Jones Act, even temporarily, for Puerto Rico will disrupt a vital ocean cargo bridge to the island at the worst possible time — in the middle of the recovery effort. Jones Act carriers have been delivering the goods to Puerto Rico, and will continue to provide the necessary shipping services to ensure a timely and successful recovery.