

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

February 21, 2013

The Honorable Bill Shuster  
Chairman  
House Committee on Transportation  
and Infrastructure  
2165 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nick J. Rahall II  
Ranking Democrat Member  
House Committee on Transportation  
and Infrastructure  
2163 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Duncan D. Hunter  
Chairman  
House Subcommittee on Coast Guard  
and Maritime Infrastructure  
507 Ford House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Shuster, Chairman Hunter and Ranking Member Rahall:

On Sunday, February 10, 2013 the cruise ship CARNIVAL TRIUMPH suffered a fire in the aft engine room. Although the ship's fire suppression systems quickly extinguished the fire, damage from the fire resulted in a loss of power and propulsion leaving the vessel adrift about 150 miles off the coast of the Yucatán Peninsula in the Gulf of Mexico. Despite the partial restoration of power by emergency generators, for the next four days more than 4,200 passengers and crew had limited access to food, fresh water, and air conditioning. Even worse, sanitary facilities malfunctioned, leaving many areas in the vessel fetid and unsanitary.

As the ranking Democrat member on the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation, I respectfully request that you schedule an oversight hearing on this important maritime safety matter at the earliest possible date.

Now that the vessel and everyone on board have arrived back safely in the United States, we need to understand what happened, and why. As much as the cruise industry touts its record of regulatory compliance and safe operations, the fact is that this incident is only the latest in a series of marine casualties affecting cruise ships that have happened over the past few years.

I am pleased that the United States Coast Guard and the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) will participate as a Marine Safety Investigative State in the marine casualty investigation initiated by the Bahamas Maritime Authority. This is a necessary and important first step but it should not limit our oversight. The recent pattern of cruise ship casualties raises legitimate questions concerning the adequacy of international marine safety standards for passenger vessels required under the Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, or SOLAS. The regulation of foreign-flagged cruise ships by their respective flag states, and the efficacy of the

U.S. Coast Guard's port state control inspection regime for cruise ships entering and departing U.S. waters also warrant our scrutiny.

A cruise vacation remains a popular recreational option for many people based primarily on the assumption that a cruise is safe, reliable and trouble-free. An oversight hearing examining the circumstances surrounding the CARNIVAL TRIUMPH casualty would send an important signal to the American public that the safety of life at sea remains a paramount concern of our committee. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Garamendi". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "G".

JOHN GARAMENDI  
Ranking Democrat Member  
Subcommittee on Coast Guard  
and Maritime Transportation