

Op-Ed Template: About 500 Words – National Maritime Day ‘Sound Off’ Recognition Initiative - May 18-22, 2020

**‘Sound Off’ For National Maritime Day**

From May 18 to May 22, vessels in port throughout the Americas will sound their horns four times at noon each day to celebrate National Maritime Day. Decreed by the U.S. Congress in 1933 to mark the first successful crossing of the Atlantic Ocean using steam propulsion, this year’s focus will be on the role of ports and the maritime workforce in the current COVID-19 global pandemic response and recovery.

The National Maritime Day [**“Sound Off” initiative**](https://www.aapa-ports.org/advocating/content.aspx?ItemNumber=22582&RDtoken=26880&userID=7882) recognizes the dedication, sacrifice and professionalism of maritime workers in their collective efforts to slow the spread of coronavirus while ensuring a steady flow of vital goods and services. In the U.S. [FOR NON-U.S. MEMBERS, INSERT YOUR COUNTRY], more than 652,000 [FOR NON-U.S. MEMBERS, INSERT APPROPRIATE STATISTIC] logistics professionals work daily to ensure that cargo and travelers move efficiently through the nation’s ports. By passenger and crew screenings, vessel quarantines and other protective measures, seaports are committed to ‘flattening the curve,’ both domestically and among our critical trading partners around the world.

Led by the American Association of Port Authorities [FOR NON-U.S. MEMBERS: and the Association of Canadian Port Authorities]– and united in our common goal of keeping the supply chain moving throughout the hemisphere – we’re proud to join hundreds of ports in North, Central and South America, and the Caribbean, to highlight and celebrate the value of seaports.

Like ports worldwide, we have an ongoing commitment to remind our community and its leaders about the important role we play in [LOCATION] and our vital link to the global economy.

The importance of ports in our region is well documented. According to [IHS Markit’s GTA Forecasting](http://port.informz.net/z/cjUucD9taT05MTY1MzI0JnA9MSZ1PTEwNTk4MjI2MjUmbGk9NzQ0ODgyMTQ/index.html), combined international sea trade moving through Western Hemisphere seaports in 2018 totaled nearly 4.2 billion metric tons in volume and US$3.7 trillion in value. Seaports in Central and South America handled 1.86 billion metric tons of cargo valued at US$1.17 trillion, while North American seaports handled 2.34 billion metric tons of goods, valued at US$2.53 trillion.  [FOR NON-U.S. MEMBERS: Use regional market information only/convert for local currency]

However, the economic worth of all this cargo in terms of jobs and business activity is much greater than its market value. According to Martin Associates of Lancaster, Pa., in the U.S. alone, port activity generates 31 million American jobs and accounts for over one quarter of the nation’s economy.

Ports also play a critical role in providing goods that impact our everyday lives. Millions of tons of essential cargo, valued at more than US$10 billion, move through Western Hemisphere seaports every day.

As families, businesses and communities begin to recover from the pandemic we’re all facing, AAPA-member ports are ready to deliver the products you need and want, keep your shopping cart filled, and take whatever actions are needed to support a strong and stable economy.

So, please, when you hear ship horns sounding in your port simultaneously at noon each day May 18-22, post something on social media about the value they bring to your life by using the hashtags **#NationalMaritimeDay**, **#SoundOff** and **#SeaportsDeliver**.