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FEDERAL MARITIME COMMISSION

September 29, 2003

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Bryant VanBrakle

Secretary

Federal Maritime Commission

800 North Capitol Street, NW

Washington, DC 20573

Dear Bryant:

It is my understanding that United Parcel Service has filed for an exemption from the prohibition on Non-Vessel Operation Common Carriers (NVOCCs) from entering into confidential contracts with their customers. I write in support of the UPS petition currently pending before the FMC.

During consideration of the *Ocean Shipping Reform Act (OSRA)* revisions of 1998, Congress carefully considered all aspects of the ocean shipping industry including the role of NVOCCs. Based on the nature of ocean shipping at the time, Congress determined that NVOCCs should be regulated differently than vessel operators. In the late **1990s**, most NVOCCs were small enterprises that neither owned ocean vessels nor the cargo being shipped. In order to protect shippers and to guarantee liability coverage, Congress determined that NVOCCs should operate under a published tariff system when dealing with their customers.

However, the state of the U.S. Ocean shipping industry has changed dramatically since passage of **OSRA**. There has been unprecedented consolidation among ocean carriers resulting in the loss of major U.S. flagged carriers.. In an effort to offer customers a full range of services, these very same carriers have created vertically integrated logistics companies that now compete with NVOCCs.

UPS operates one of the most sophisticated, integrated, intermodal transportation network in the world, which includes air, rail, surface, and NVOCC transportation, and is deemed a "carrier" in the surface and air freight industries. Furthermore, UPS makes significant annual capital investments to its asset-based transportation infrastructure. These facts alone set UPS apart from the companies that first raised concerns about the regulatory status of NVOCCs.

The UPS petition, citing the recent evolution of the ocean shipping marketplace, is precisely the reason Congress granted such broad exemption authority to the FMC.

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While anticipating dramatic changes in the ocean shipping industry with the passage of OSRA, Congress did not contemplate how fast or how smoothly the market could adapt to these changes. By granting this petition, the FMC will acknowledge these changes, level the playing field between **NVOCCs** and vessel operators, and ultimately benefit ocean shipping consumers around the world. |

I am hopeful the FMC will give the UPS petition its utmost consideration and render an equitable decision on this matter based upon the merits of the case.


S. [Redacted] [Redacted]
Member of Congress

SB/dg