

## **Working Group of Pilotage Advisory Committee**

### Introduction of higher powered tugs to the Port of Hong Kong

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this paper is to seek members' view on introducing higher powered tugs for berthing and unberthing Very Large Container Ships (VLCS) in Hong Kong.

#### **Background**

2. In the last Pilotage Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting held on 15 October 2009, a PAC member raised that the number of VLCS with overall length of about 400m calling at Hong Kong had been increasing, there would be a need for using more powerful tugs for safe berthing and unberthing of such vessels. A letter on the issue is attached at Annex for members' reference.

3. In the meeting some members opined that for safety reason, increase demand for higher-powered tugs would be inevitable in the next couple of years with the increase in the size of the vessels calling at Hong Kong. On the other hand, some members considered that the tug charges might be increased if higher-powered tugs were deployed unless the number of tugs required for berthing and unberthing could be reduced.

4. After discussion, the meeting agreed that a working group with parties concerned should be set up to discuss this matter.

#### **Advice Sought**

5. In order to ascertain the necessity of deploying higher-powered tugs for berthing and unberthing of VLCS and to maintain the safety of the Port, members are invited to offer their views on the topic.

Marine Department  
January 2010



Your Ref: (46) in HQ/COM 928/29(19)  
Our Ref: PF/fc/L0909/190

30<sup>th</sup> September 2009

Mr. John Leung  
Secretary, Pilotage Advisory Committee  
c/o Marine Department  
Harbour Building,  
38 Pier Road, Hong Kong  
G. P. O. Box 4155  
Hong Kong  
Email: [jcsleung@mardep.gov.hk](mailto:jcsleung@mardep.gov.hk)

BY EMAIL & BY POST

Dear Mr. Leung,

**Pilotage Advisory Committee (PAC) Meeting  
at 10:00 a.m. on 15 October 2009 (Thursday)**

Many thanks for your letter dated 18 September 2009.

As I have to participate in the China International Rescue and Salvage Conference in the Mainland, Capt Wu Ka Shun (Assistant General Manager of South China Towing Co Ltd) will represent me to attend the captioned meeting. However, the tug industry would like to seek PAC Members' view on the necessity of deploying higher horsepower tugs for berthing/unberthing VLCS. Kindly put this issue on the agenda for Members' discussion. Here is some background information for raising this issue:

1. Since the endorsement of the amendment to BGL Chapter 3 on 14 Dec 2006, the demand for using 3,600<sup>+</sup> BHP tugs have been increasing for 10% every year. That means new vessels are getting bigger and bigger, urging for the use of more powerful tugs.
2. When the said amendment was done in 2006, most container vessels using 3,600/4,000 BHP tugs were about 300 to 340 meters LOA (7,000 to 8,500 TEUs) but now quite a number of ships have LOA being increased to as many as 397 meters (14,000<sup>+</sup> TEUs).
3. The AXS-Alphaliner Monthly Monitor Report September 2009 (attached as Enc 1) reveals that more VLCS Fleet will be delivered within next 3 years, at the peak in Year 2011.
4. Other tug operators in the Asia-Pacific Region have been deploying higher power tugs ranging from 4,600 to 6,000 BHP (list attached as Enc 2). Comparatively speaking, Hong Kong is a bit outdated in this aspect because BGL have not aggressively demand for the higher power tugs.

I understand that PAC has enhanced navigation safety in 2006 by making the use of 3600<sup>+</sup> BHP tugs mandatory for serving vessels of LOA  $\geq$  300M and/or Draft  $\geq$  12.5M. However, it is still 3,600 BHP only. Liners and tug operators tend to fulfill the minimum requirement in the BGL. Isn't it time to review the situation now in view of the development of VLCS and the aggressive application of more power tugs around Asia-Pacific Region?

**Hongkong Salvage & Towage**  
2/F, TYTL 108 RP, Sai Tso Wan Road,  
Tsing Yi Island, New Territories, Hong Kong  
Tel: (852) 2612 6800  
Fax: (852) 2480 5894  
E-mail: [hkst@hktug.com](mailto:hkst@hktug.com)  
Website: [www.hktug.com](http://www.hktug.com)

香港打撈及拖船  
香港新界青衣島西草灣路108地段2樓  
電話: (852) 2612 6800  
傳真: (852) 2480 5894  
電郵: [hkst@hktug.com](mailto:hkst@hktug.com)  
網址: [www.hktug.com](http://www.hktug.com)

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The tug operators in Hong Kong will keep an open mind in these aspects, pending for some fruitful discussions in the PAC meetings. While we believe that more powerful tugs will incur heavier capital investment, we are prepared to cope with Pilot's &/or PAC's requirements and invest in these PROVIDED there is really a demand for them. Since safety is a major concern for Hong Kong being one of the major world-reknowned navigation centre, it would be appropriate for PAC Members to share such concern.

I look forward to hearing from you with thanks.

Yours Sincerely,

  
FONG Yuk Choi, Philcas  
(Representing Tug Operators)

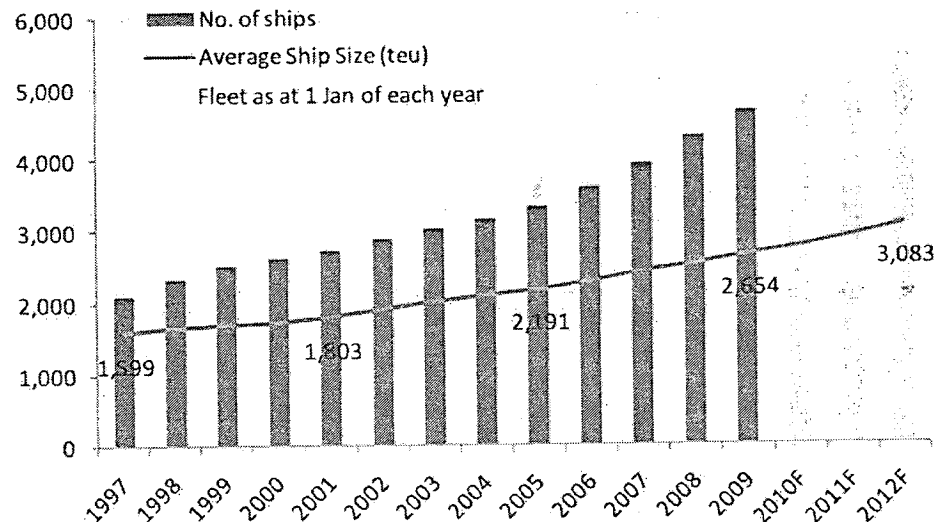
Enc. 1. Alphaliner Monthly Monitor Report (September 2009)  
2. Major Operators in Asia-Pacific Region With Tugs Ranging From 4,600 to 6,000 BHP

c.c. Capt. WU Ka Shun, South China Towing Co Ltd (Email: [kswu@southchinatowing.com.hk](mailto:kswu@southchinatowing.com.hk))  
Mr. TANG Shun Hua, Yiu Lian Dockyards Ltd (Email: [tangshunhua@cmhk.com](mailto:tangshunhua@cmhk.com),  
[tsh1952619@yahoo.com.cn](mailto:tsh1952619@yahoo.com.cn))

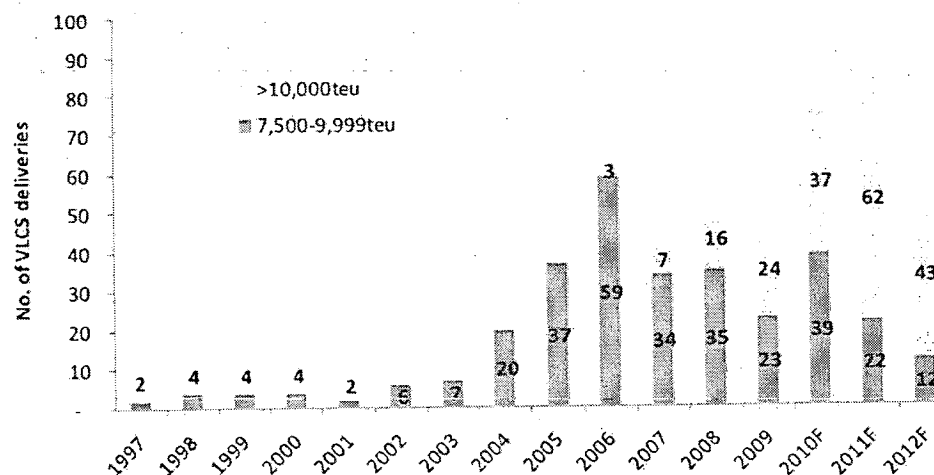
Major Tug Operators In Asia-Pacific Region With Tugs Ranging from 4,600 to 6,000 BHP

Hong Kong	: HK Salvage & Towage	2 x 5,000 BHP (on order)
	Yiu Lian Dockyard	1 x 6,000 BHP (on order)
	South China Towing	1 x 5,000 BHP (plan)
Shanghai	: Fuxing Shipping service	1 x 5,200 BHP
		2 x 6,000 BHP
Shenzhen	: Yantian Tugboat	2 x 5,000 BHP
	Shenzhen Chiwan Tugboat	1 x 5,600 BHP
	Shenzhen Dapang AP Moller	2 x 5,000 BHP
	Dachan Tugboat	2 x 5,000 BHP (plan)
	Yiu Lian Dockyard	1 x 6,000 BHP (on order)
Taiwan	: Taichung Harbour Bureau	2 x 5,400 BHP
		2 x 4,600 BHP
	Taipei Port	1 x 5,000 BHP
Singapore	: PSA Marine	9 x 5,000 BHP
		1 x 5,360 BHP
Japan	: Keppel Smit	3 x 5,600 BHP
	Naikai	3 x 5,000 BHP
	Fukushina Kisen	1 x 5,000 BHP
Australia	: Svitzer	3 x 5,000 BHP
		3 x 5,600 BHP
		2 x 5,630 BHP

**World Fleet/ Average vessel size**



**VLCS Fleet by Year of Delivery**



**VLCS Watch**

**Vessels ≥ 7,500 teu only**

No. of VLCS (Current)	267
Total VLCS TEU (Current)	2.426 Mteu
No. of VLCS (On order)	259
Total VLCS TEU (On order)	2.923 Mteu

**VLCS Deployment by Carrier**

**VLCS deployment (ranked by current vessel count)**

