



MEMORANDUM

To: ACSA Board of Directors
From: Buddy Allen
Date: Tuesday, November 19, 2019
Re: Washington Update

After spending most of last week in Washington, I thought it would be valuable to provide an update, as we have several policy issues that are in play. In addition to the ongoing advocacy, I will provide update on the current active agenda in DC as well as comments on trade and the announced purchase of Xinjiang cotton by the Chinese Reserve last week provided by Yuan and Associates.

Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC): Position Limit Rulemaking/Cotton On-Call Report:

Nine years after statutory language in the Dodd Frank Act directed the CFTC to more broadly apply the Position Limits Rule in the observation of excessive speculative trading, it is apparent that under the new chairmanship of Heath Tarbert, formerly Assistant Secretary of the US Treasury Department, the commission is focused and committed to quickly developing a Position Limits Rule Proposal that can be finalized. Since 2010 there have been several proposals but nothing has been finalized. The current goal of the commission is to have a proposed rule issued in late January. This proposal will be out for an undetermined period for public comment, likely 60-90 days. It would not be surprising to see the commission need additional time to develop this proposal.

During the administration of the current rule, we have seen constriction from exchanges in their issuance of hedge exemptions due to guidance and uncertainty of the commission's view on the definition of *bona fide* hedging. While this has been a challenge and required continual outreach, the problems will compound if a rule is finalized that doesn't address our key policy themes.

We spent significant time with each commissioner's senior staff as well as Chairman Tarbert, Commissioners Stump, Behnam, and Berkovitz personally. While covering a broad survey of our ACSA Futures Committee Policy, the primary themes of our message can be categorized into the critical need for a comprehensive definition of *bona fide* hedging and the importance of speculative position limits for convergence, risk management, and price discovery, given the potential impact that could be demonstrated by unreasonable volumes of speculative trading in smaller ag markets. In addition to advocating at the CFTC, we met with both House and Senate Ag Committee Staff as well as several members of Congress with influence to this issue through their assignment to the Risk Management Subcommittee of the Agriculture Committee.

We are concerned that the commission will potentially make significant increases to our month speculative limits in an effort to unwind the issuance of a limited number of Risk Management Hedge Exemptions to banks.

Chairman Tarbert also said the rulemaking will include several questions regarding the cotton on-call report. For example, the proposed rule will ask commenters: (1) whether the Commission should continue to publish the report and its utility to the market; (2) if the agency no longer needs to

publish the report, should it continue to collect the data for internal use only; and (3) should the Commission abandon the report and the collection of such information.

Chairman Tarbert specifically requested formal comments on the coming proposal from ACSA. This issue will be a key focus for ACSA in 2020.

Federal Maritime Commission (FMC): Proposed Interpretive Rule on Detention and Demurrage:

FMC recently issued their proposed interpretative rule on detention and demurrage charges. ACSA provided formal public comments on this rule consistent with themes of our ACSA Transportation Committee Policy addressing the proposed rule through the following six themes.

1. ACSA Applauds the FMC's Investigation into Detention and Demurrage Practices and Regulations and Strongly Supports the FMC's Proposed Interpretive Rule.
2. ACSA Supports the Interpretive Rule's Approach to Cargo Availability and Urges Additional Consideration of Intermodal Equipment Availability.
3. ACSA Supports the Interpretive Rule's Approach to Assessing Notice of Cargo Availability.
4. ACSA Supports the Interpretive Rule's Factors for Assessing the Reasonableness of Demurrage and Detention Policies.
5. ACSA Supports the Interpretive Rule's Guidance on Consistent and Transparent Terminology.
6. ACSA Urges the FMC to Ensure the Scope of the Final Interpretive Rule Accounts for the Realities of Modern Shipping.

In addition to expressing our positions concerning this rule, this action in conjunction with considerable outreach to the Senate Commerce Committee under the chairmanship of Senator Roger Wicker R-MS is focused on furthering the implementation of the Memphis Supply Chain Innovation Team's recommendations concerning supply chain velocity, particularly the establishment of an interoperable, gray chassis pool.

See complete comments attached.

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA):

ACSA and NCC met together with USDA last week to address the following pending matters:

Review COPS Catalogue Sales Improvements:

COPS is being enhanced to allow the following:

- Show compression charges associated with bales in the offering, the amount assessed and if the amount was collected upfront before the bale was pledged for a loan
- Buyers will have the ability to submit one bid for multiple offerings
- The ability to download a CSV (text) file which will include a separate item for compression charges.

- COPS enhancements are currently in testing and will be deployed by November 19th.

A webinar was held today to allow a forum for questions regarding new COPS functions. Please reach out if additional support would be helpful.

CCC Cotton Inventory and AMS Offerings:

Currently, CCC has 44,429 upland cotton bales on inventory. There have not been any forfeitures of pima cotton for the 2018 crop year.

The catalogue offerings are scheduled for **Wednesday, November 20, 2019**. The offerings will be by region (5 regions) in larger lots with 3 loads per lot.

Status of Requesting Relief for Charges Owed (Previous Auctions):

Due to the lack of clarity concerning the payment of compression charges in the USDA guidelines for previous cotton auctions, requests for relief on charges owed to warehouses for cotton purchased from CCC on winning bids was submitted by AMS to USDA's Office of General Counsel (OGC) for review and AMS is still waiting for their opinion.

Utilizing The Seam to Streamline CCC Owned Cotton Auctions:

ACSA had previously requested that CCC consider utilizing The Seam to allow auctions sales to occur in the format our industry is accustomed to. Additionally, we have stressed the importance of receiving responses to bids in a timeline that allows hedging without market exposure.

We are advised that the request has been vetted and cleared by Office of General Counsel (OGC) and is currently under consideration by USDA-AMS Administrator Bruce Sommers.

Cotton Flow Rule Change Implementation:

ACSA and NCC expressed concerns regarding the lack of adoption and understanding of the requirements of the new cotton flow rules contained in the cotton storage agreement, particularly mandatory acceptance of staging orders, mandatory response within two business days to shipping orders with batch 23 shipping order updates, and adherence to mandated hours of operation.

AMS contacted cotton warehouse operators in writing via email in June of 2019 advising them of the changes in the Federal Regulations governing delivery and shipping standards for cotton warehouses [[7 CFR 1423.11](#)]. The changes were incorporated into a new cotton storage warehouse agreement, and cotton warehouse operators were instructed to submit the signed document back to AMS by August 31, 2019. To date, AMS has received about 180 signed updated CSA's out of the 330+ warehouse operators that were contacted. We were collectively concerned with the lack CSA execution to date.

While NCC and ACSA offered to be of assistance in raising awareness of the requirements, it was agreed that many of the warehouse operators that are not compliant with the new requirement tend to not be members of cotton industry organizations and may not be as receptive to the announcement or may have ignored it all together. ACSA and NCC requested further correspondence on these new requirements from USDA directly to all warehousemen as soon as possible. Jose Gonzalez USDA/AMS committed to meet with his team and follow up with an outreach plan to help stimulate adoption.

The conversation then shifted to enforcement. AMS suggested that they could exercise the option to disapprove warehouses without executed CSA's as authorized CCC cotton warehouses, however, the 2019 cotton loan making season is well underway and would be disruptive to cotton producers credit needs at a very critical time.

AMS agreed to provide NCC and ACSA an updated list of warehouse operators that have not submitted an updated CSA for the 2019 cotton loan making season. USDA pledged to reach out on and individual basis to warehouses to explain the new requirements and expedite the completion of CSA's.

NCC and ACSA in turn will assist with educating cotton warehouse operators and shippers of the requirement to submit a new CSA and rule changes in effort to further implementation and avoid loan procedural disruptions. Failure to submit a signed revised CSA will result in a warehouse losing its designation as a CCC Approved Warehouse for MAL purposes.

Loan Transfers – Alternative Shipping Destination:

ACSA requested that FSA consider allowing subsequent transfers of CCC collateral, or rather an alternative delivery location. Even though merchants have the capability of cancelling an approved transfer prior to the bales being moved, upon doing so, they lose their reserved shipping date.

FSA agreed to look into the level of effort required to update COPS to allow for an alternative delivery site, but further investigation is required into the Federal Regulations [[7 CFR 1427.16](#)] governing transfers of cotton bales under a CCC loan. Follow-up discussions with FSA, AMS, and EWR, Inc. will be necessary to determine the feasibility of this recommendation from NCC and ACSA.

ELS Competitiveness Program:

Currently, the introduction of the Giza 94 quotation into the calculation for the ELS Competitiveness Program is being held up due to a disagreement between USDA and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) over the imposition of pay-go requirements on agency decisions. Outreach is being made by member of Congress and USDA leadership to try and resolve this as quickly as possible. This change appears to move from one road block to the next. Additionally, it is still unclear at what quality conversion level the Giza 94 quotation will be considered, which will likely warrant additional lobbying after the quote's inclusion.

The following USDA staff met with ACSA and NCC:

Bill Beam, FSA, DAFP	Sherrie Grimm, FSA, FPAC-BC, EPAD
Carie Cameron, AMS	Jose Gonzalez, AMS
Ty Davis, AMS	Fred Gustafson, FSA, FPAC-BC
Kelly Dawson, FSA, PSD	Kinley Hartman, AMS
Lisa Edie, AMS	Kevin Hartwell, FSA, FPAC-BC
Ian Edmonds, AMS	Martha Mitchell, AMS
Shannon Fulghem, FSA, FPAC-BC	Dan Schofer, AMS
Ron Gardner, FSA, CTR	Dana Wood, FSA, PDD

General Trade/United States Trade Representative (USTR):

China:

- Optimism that a limited trade deal could be completed has begun to fade because of uncertainty over whether the White House will agree to scale back tariffs and how the agreement will be enforced. In fact, President Trump has pushed back on reports about how willing the U.S. is to roll back tariffs on Chinese imports, and he also said if a phase one deal is not reached, the U.S. will raise tariffs “very substantially.”

- According to reports, a U.S. demand that China provide its plans as to how it will purchase as much as \$50 billion in ag goods annually has become a sticking point in negotiations for the phase one deal. China is resisting U.S. requests for monthly, quarterly, and annual targets for purchases, as well as insisting that both sides agree to roll back tariffs before a phase one deal can be finalized. Meanwhile, although China restarted its purchases of U.S. ag products, it is now delaying unloading of American soybeans (about 1.8 million tons) at its ports, which could slow down further purchases.

The following is from our Beijing based consultants, Yuan and Associates:

On November 14th, China announced its plan to put 500,000 tons of high quality 2019/20 Xinjiang cotton to refill the national reserves.

From December 2nd, 2019 to March 31st, 2020, China Grain Reserves Group (Sinograin) will conduct daily (work day) purchases of 7,000 tons of Xinjiang cotton through the China National Cotton Exchange (CNCE), which should be certified by the China Fiber Quality Inspection Center on quality grade. The highest purchase price will be linked with the domestic cotton price and updated on a weekly basis. During the process, if the price difference between the Chinese and international market succeeds RMB 800/ton three days in a row, the purchase will be suspended until the gap drops back to less than RMB 800/ton. (On November 13th, the price difference is RMB 42/ton.)

The intention of the refill is believed to be that the Chinese government wants to increase the quality of the reserves and keep the domestic cotton price stable. In fact, the domestic cotton market has reacted calmly with no major price increase in response to this announcement, which we believe is mainly due to the below reasons.

1. The industry expected the refill decision to be announced since April.
2. Comparing with the high stock of commercial inventory and good production in 2019/20, 500,000 tons of cotton, which is about 10% of Xinjiang harvest in 2019, is hardly a game changer to impact the market, such as stimulating major price growth.
3. China sets a high-quality standard for national reserves this time, not all of this crop year's productions in Xinjiang will meet the requirement. (e.g. Micronaire B level and above could be selected, however up to now only 30% of cotton in the southern Xinjiang could reach B level and above.)
4. According to the government purchase pricing standard, local farmers hardly to make any profit as it barely covers the production and processing cost.

At this stage, it is hard to say if China will still purchase foreign cotton to refill the reserves, but we cannot rule out the possibilities. The most likely situation is that China could cover the purchase of US cotton as part of the phase one agreement out of political considerations rather than market demands, our discussions with working level contacts at CCTA and CCA have supported this evaluation.



• *Yuan Associates*

Europe:

- The White House announced late last week that it will delay tariffs on cars and auto parts from the EU. President Trump had set a mid-November deadline to decide whether to impose new duties, but lobbying efforts and German carmakers' plans to shift global production to American suppliers likely led to the delay. The EU has threatened to retaliate with tariffs on \$39 billion of American goods if Trump carries out his threat.

USMCA:

- House Majority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) said an agreement between Democrats and the White House on changes to the USMCA is imminent. House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD) added there is a sense of urgency among Democrats to pass the agreement. He indicated, however, that work remains to be done to enforce protections for workers and that Mexico should provide the funding for those protections.

Other:

- On Tuesday, the Trump administration made the latest move in its effort to overhaul the WTO when it threatened to block the adoption of the organization's budget. WTO decisions must be made by a consensus of all 164 members, so a U.S. veto could temporarily close the organization as soon as January 1. According to a brief statement, the U.S. has two main concerns: (1) the WTO is paying exorbitant fees to members of its appellate body; and (2) funds may be diverted to a proxy dispute settlement system favored by the EU, Canada, and Norway.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you would like to discuss these issues or have other matters we need to include in our outreach. I will be providing a slightly summarized version of this report to the membership tomorrow.

Buddy

William H. "Buddy" Allen
American Cotton Shippers Association
Phone: (901)-525-2272
ballen@acsa-cotton.org
www.acsa-cotton.org



American Cotton Shippers Association
88 Union Avenue, Suite 1204
Memphis, T N 38103

P (901)525-2272
F (901)527-8303
www.acsa-cotton.org

BEFORE THE
FEDERAL MARITIME COMMISSION

Comments on Notice of Proposed Rulemaking regarding
Interpretive Rule on Demurrage and Detention Under the Shipping Act

NON-CONFIDENTIAL

October 31, 2019

I. Introductory Comments on the FMC's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking

The American Cotton Shippers Association (“ACSA” or “Association”) hereby submits the following comments to the Federal Maritime Commission (“FMC” or “Commission”) in response to the publication of the Commission’s Notice of Proposed Rulemaking regarding Interpretive Rule on Demurrage and Detention Under the Shipping Act (“Notice of Proposed Rulemaking” or “NPR”),

published in the Federal Register at 84 Fed. Reg. 48,850 (September 17, 2019).¹ With these comments, ACSA intends to provide constructive feedback regarding the Commission's efforts to provide guidance to the industry about how it would assess the reasonableness of the demurrage and detention practices under the Shipping Act.

ACSA is a leading trade association, headquartered in Memphis, TN, that provides a united voice for the cotton merchandising trade of the United States. ACSA's member firms handle over 70% of the U.S. cotton sold in domestic and foreign markets and over 60% of the traded foreign cotton growths in the world. ACSA takes an active role in promoting the increased use of cotton in the U.S. and throughout the world; establishing with other cotton trade organizations national and international standards for trade; collaborating with producer organizations throughout the cotton belt in formulating farm programs; and cooperating with government agencies in the administration of such programs.

ACSA members purchase cotton from producers and sell to consumers all over the world. In addition to helping their customers manage risks from price, location, quality, capacity, cash flow, and currency value, ACSA members bear the responsibilities of managing supply chain logistics to fulfill their contractual obligations of timely and proper delivery to its destination, throughout the globe. The maintenance of intermodal supply chain velocity and integrity is an absolute necessity for our industry.

ACSA submits the comments below in accordance with the Commission's request for the submission of written comments by interested parties on this important issue.

¹ The FMC published a related notice on September 25, 2019, extending the comment period on the NPR to October 31, 2019. 84 Fed. Reg. 50,369 (Sept. 25, 2019).

II. ACSA Applauds the FMC’s Investigation into Detention and Demurrage Practices and Regulations and Strongly Supports the FMC’s Proposed Interpretive Rule.

ACSA strongly supports the FMC’s proposed Interpretive Rule on Demurrage and Detention Under the Shipping Act (the “Interpretive Rule”) and believes that it provides fair guidance on what constitutes reasonable detention and demurrage practices. ACSA applauds the FMC’s investigation into the demurrage and detention charges assessed by ocean common carriers, marine terminal operators, and ocean transportation intermediaries, as well as the crucial work that Commissioner Dye and the Memphis Supply Chain Innovation Team are doing to improve freight fluidity in Memphis and the Mid-South region.

ACSA believes the Interpretive Rule’s implementation would benefit the United States’ ocean-borne shipping industry as well as the industries that depend upon its efficient operation. As noted in these comments, ACSA supports many of the principles underlying the Interpretive Rule and hopes that the insight and practical experiences of shippers relayed in these comments can support the development of effective standards for determining the reasonableness of detention and demurrage practices. In addition, given the Interpretive Rule’s ultimate goal of improving overall freight fluidity and the realities of modern shipping, ACSA urges the FMC to consider applying the principles outlined in the Interpretive Rule to segments of point-to-point ocean-borne shipping that may occur outside the confines of port terminals.

III. ACSA Supports the Interpretive Rule’s Approach to Cargo Availability and Urges Additional Consideration of Intermodal Equipment Availability.

ACSA supports the Interpretive Rule’s approach to cargo availability and again recognizes particularly the Memphis Supply Chain Innovation Team’s efforts on this issue as it affects freight fluidity in Memphis and the Mid-South region. As noted in the Interpretive Rule’s discussion of the

“Incentive Principle,” the purpose of demurrage and detention charges are to incentivize cargo movement and the productive use of assets, including containers and port or terminal land.² While cargo is often treated as available when it is unloaded from the vessel, ACSA’s members are assessed demurrage and detention charges for delays caused by circumstances outside their control that make cargo practically unavailable. As noted in the Interpretive Rule and in FMC’s Fact Finding Investigation No. 28’s Final Report (the “Final Report”), the circumstances causing delayed cargo pickups include congestion at terminals, lack of available appointments, cargo being held by customs for inspections, cargo becoming inaccessible because of its being kept in a “closed” area or terminal, and inclement weather conditions.³

ACSA concurs with the Interpretive Rule’s principle that detention and demurrage policies cannot likely be reasonable if they fail to account for these extenuating circumstances and continue to assess detention and demurrage fees even while cargo is not **actually** available.⁴ Further, ACSA agrees that reasonable detention and demurrage policies must include terms that suspend penalties and charges when cargo is not actually available, including when cargo is undergoing government inspection.⁵ Moreover, multiple transportation nodes exist throughout the intermodal supply chains of exporters, like ACSA members, which have the potential to create cargo delays – triggering detention and demurrage fees when cargo is, in fact, unavailable. Therefore, to be reasonable, when free time ends and detention and demurrage begins must be linked to the point in time when cargo actually becomes available. As the Interpretive Rule indicates, this approach would also require FMC to consider terminal appointment systems in making reasonableness determinations, as some minimum amount of appointment availability is necessary to provide adequate cargo availability.⁶ Applying these standards for determining

² Interpretive Rule at 2.

³ Interpretive Rule at 7; FMC, *Fact Finding Investigation No. 28 Final Report* (“Final Report”) at 7, https://www2.fmc.gov/readingroom/docs/FF%20No.%2028/FF-28_FR.pdf/.

⁴ Interpretive Rule at 7-8.

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ Final Report at 20.

reasonableness would ensure that detention and demurrage practices provide real, effective incentives for efficient cargo pickup and do not unreasonably burden ocean transport intermediaries for delays caused by uncontrollable circumstances.

While ACSA supports the principles raised in the Interpretive Rule regarding cargo availability, the current version of the Interpretive Rule still fails to adequately address the link between intermodal equipment availability, including chassis, and cargo availability. This omission is significant given that chassis availability was cited throughout the Final Report as a major cause of terminal congestion and cargo unavailability, and has been a key challenge raised by shippers during the FMC’s investigations into detention and demurrage practices.⁷ It was also a major focus of the Memphis Supply Chain Innovation Team’s White Paper, which, as part of the FMC’s investigation into detention and demurrage practices, sought to improve supply chain efficiency around the Memphis Hub.⁸ The White Paper’s specific recommendation on the implementation of an interoperable chassis gray pool only underscores the inextricable link between chassis availability, cargo availability, and freight fluidity more broadly.⁹ To be as effective as possible, the Interpretive Rule must account for the issues affecting chassis allocation and availability, including the “captive chassis” phenomenon created by box rules established between carriers and equipment providers.¹⁰ In establishing reasonableness standards for detention and demurrage practices, ACSA urges FMC to explicitly account for whether ocean-borne cargo has been made unavailable for pick up as a result of chassis unavailability and to treat chassis unavailability as requiring the suspension of demurrage and detention charges.

⁷ Final Report at 4, 7.

⁸ The Memphis Hub is a major intermodal freight hub and is home to five Class I railroads, the largest cargo airport in North America, and the country’s fourth busiest inland port.

⁹ The Memphis Supply Chain Innovation Team, *A Single Gray Chassis Pool Fosters Fluid Commerce and Improves Supply Chain Velocity*, <https://www.fmc.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/MemphisSupplyChainWhitepaper.pdf>

¹⁰ *Id.*

IV. ACSA Supports the Interpretive Rule's Approach to Assessing Notice of Cargo Availability.

ACSA supports the FMC's determination that the type of notice and manner by which notice of cargo availability is communicated are critical to determining the reasonableness of detention and demurrage practices.¹¹ ACSA also agrees that to whom notice is given and the clarity of information about when and where cargo may be retrieved are relevant reasonableness considerations, and that the timing, accessibility, and method of notice all impact the ability of shippers to pick up available cargo efficiently. Thus, ACSA supports the Interpretive Rule's position that reasonable demurrage practices must link the timing of notice to the start of free time.¹² ACSA also supports with the Interpretive Rule's proposal that "push notifications" should be considered superior form of notice and that their use should be accounted for when determining the reasonableness of detention and demurrage practices.

V. ACSA Supports the Interpretive Rule's Factors for Assessing the Reasonableness of Demurrage and Detention Policies.

ACSA agrees that the features of dispute resolution processes identified in the FMC's Interpretive Rule, including the clarity and accessibility of instructions, the sufficiency of information included in billing documents, and existence of evidentiary guidance, should be considered in determining the reasonableness of detention and demurrage policies. In addition, ACSA supports the principle proposed in the Interpretive Rule that clear dispute resolution and billing processes should be negotiated and enforced in service contracts strictly and directly between **contracting** parties and that charges owed by cargo interests should not be imposed on third parties.

Whether unresolved disputes build up or are consistently addressed in a timely fashion substantially impacts freight fluidity for ACSA members. Accordingly, in addition to the factors already

¹¹ Interpretive Rule at 9.

¹² *Id.* at 10.

identified in the proposed Interpretive Rule, ACSA believes the Interpretive Rule should consider whether timelines for concluding a dispute resolution processes are explicitly defined in the relevant detention and demurrage policies.

VI. ACSA Supports the Interpretive Rule's Guidance on Consistent and Transparent Terminology.

As an association of merchants engaged in trading cotton, a global commodity, ACSA strongly supports the Interpretive Rule's principle that the consistency and transparency of terminology used in detention and demurrage practices and regulations should be considered in determining reasonableness. ACSA agrees with the Interpretive Rule's accounting for the availability and clarity of terms used in detention and demurrage practices and regulations. In addition, ACSA agrees that, in making reasonableness determinations, the FMC should consider whether these terms' use or definitions are consistent with their general use in U.S. trade, or if they differ based on location, time period, or context. Finally, ACSA agrees with the principle that detention and demurrage should be defined in terms of what asset is the source of a charge as opposed to location.

VII. ACSA Urges the FMC to Ensure the Scope of the Final Interpretive Rule Accounts for the Realities of Modern Shipping.

As a final matter, ACSA urges the FMC to ensure the scope of the Interpretive Rule accounts for the realities of modern supply chains. Specifically, for a rule addressing detention and demurrage to be effective in improving freight fluidity in ocean-borne trade, its application cannot be isolated to shipping activities occurring at port terminals alone. ACSA's members engage in international shipping transactions that invariably originate at inland points either in the United States or overseas and terminate at a corresponding inland point either in the United States or overseas. Carriers, responding to the demands of consumers, have crafted service contracts that incorporate inland movements and services,

providing point-to-point distribution. Thus, the reasonableness of detention and demurrage practices and regulations, as they apply to *inland* movements in point-to-point service contracts, have an equally significant impact on the fluidity of all ocean-borne trade.

Given the impact that detention and demurrage practices have on all segments of maritime supply chains, ACSA urges the FMC to craft a final Interpretive Rule that accounts for inland components of ocean-borne shipping transactions. This approach would reflect the reality that unreasonable detention and demurrage practices do not begin and end at port terminals. The FMC currently regulates certain terms of service contracts and tariffs that incorporate inland movements and services. Thus, similarly applying the Interpretive Rule to point-to-point service contracts would be consistent with FMC's regulatory regime.

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Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on this very important topic. ACSA would be pleased to discuss these comments with the Commission if it would be helpful and to participate in any follow-up meetings or events that the Commission may host to discuss potential next steps.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William H. Allen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "William" and last name "Allen" clearly distinguishable.

William H. Allen

President and CEO

American Cotton Shippers Association