

# FMC supports shipper stance on box weighing

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**Supporting shippers: Federal Maritime  
Commissioner William Doyle.**

Commissioner Doyle calls for carriers and shippers to get together to find solution on responsibilities

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FEDERAL Maritime Commissioner William Doyle has lent support to US shippers, calling for ocean carriers and beneficial cargo owners to come together ahead of the introduction of container weighing rules.

Speaking at the Global Liner Shipping conference in London today, Mr Doyle said he had spent three months trying to figure out the problem and was concerned that the issue had now become so big that it would be the subject of a Congressional Transportation Committee hearing this Thursday.

"There has been a communications lapse between carriers and shippers," Mr Doyle said. "At the International Maritime Organization level, if someone is going to be regulated they need to be at the table when decisions are made. Shippers have not been brought along the whole

way."

In a message that supports calls by the Agricultural Transportation Coalition for carriers to be responsible for the tare weight of the container, Mr Doyle said shippers didn't own or operate containers and could not be held responsible for their weight. "Shippers know the weight of their goods but not the container. Someone putting a load of frozen chicken on a train in the Mid-West cannot be expected to know how much a container, which will be packed by a third party, weighs."

Mr Doyle said he had failed to get definitive answers from ocean carriers, and called for carriers and shippers to get together. Echoing one of AgTC's bones of contention, Mr Doyle said it should be people at the operational level, rather than legal representatives, that started to look for a solution.

The amendments to the Safety of Life at Sea Convention concerning the verification of gross mass come into effect on July 1, but the US is among a number of countries that has not yet specified exactly how it will be implemented on a national level.

"The US Coast Guard does not regulate Walmart," Mr Doyle said. "Moreover, weights and measures regulations and certification in the US are handled at the state, not federal level. Do you think US states have even heard of this?"

Ocean carriers have said they are bound by IMO regulation and cannot accept containers on board without a VGM. But Mr Doyle warned that it would be unacceptable for US exports to be affected by containers being left at the dock for lack of a VGM.

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