



COUNTY OF DUKES COUNTY

MARTHA'S VINEYARD & ELIZABETH ISLANDS

November 17, 2023

Dear Mr. Ranney and Steamship Board members:

As the appointing authority for the Dukes County member of the Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket Steamship Authority, we are writing today to express our deepest concerns about the recent Sankaty incident, and the much broader concerns it raises about Steamship operations and management.

The recent events surrounding the incident on July 27th when the Sankaty broke loose of the Woods Hole dock is extremely disturbing from multiple perspectives. This is a huge safety concern - it could have occurred in any port utilized by the authority, and but for weather conditions and luck could have resulted in injury or worse. But it is not only a safety issue; the subsequent inadequate communication and lack of transparency speak to deep systemic problems in the organization.

As an appointing authority, we understand well that our role does not include direct oversight of the board or management. We have had concerns about a number of activities in the past and have allowed our representative to do his job without interference. However, we find this most recent incident to be so egregious and perhaps indicative of true negligence, that we felt it necessary to spend an hour of our November 15th County Commissioner's meeting voicing our concerns to James Malkin and the Vineyard's Port Council members John Cahill and Joseph E. Sollitto Jr. We have asked our representatives to take any corrective action necessary to restore the trust in Steamship Authority management that this community has lost.

We ask that you take this issue as seriously as we do in your deliberations and actions in response to what has occurred. Thank you for your close attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Christine Todd, Chair



For the Dukes County Commissioners:

Don Leopold, Vice Chair	Doug Ruskin	James Klingensmith
Peter Wharton	Tristan Israel	Juli Vanderhoop

cc: Port Council members	Barnstable Town Council
Member appointing authorities:	Falmouth Select Board
Nantucket County Commissioners	Mayor of New Bedford

Select boards:

Aquinnah	Oak Bluffs
Chilmark	Tisbury
Edgartown	West Tisbury
Gosnold	MV Papers, Local papers in port towns
Hyannis	