

To Brokers, Shipmanagers and Shipowners,

The U.S. Senate and House unanimously passed a bill that was signed into law by the U.S. President late on Friday January 25, 2019, temporarily ending the partial U.S. Government shutdown for three weeks while negotiations regarding funding continue.

Although it is positive news that the U.S. Government's administrative offices have reopened, we have been advised by the National Pollution Fund Center ("NPFC" is the government department that handles COFR applications) personnel that due to the extreme backlog of work resulting from the 35-day shutdown, that they will continue with the agreed shutdown procedures for the next few weeks, which was explained in our original circular dated January 11, 2019. The NPFC will endeavor to clear the accumulation of COFR related documentation that has not been processed by their department in a timely manner.

Accordingly, and to reiterate the NPFC shutdown procedures currently in place, in the event a vessel is expected to arrive in U.S. waters and its COFR record does not appear on the NPFC's website, we continue to request Members contact the local U.S. port authorities at the vessel's port of entry in advance of arrival and advise them a COFR has been submitted to the NPFC. The local port authorities will then contact the NPFC to verify the COFR details. As per current protocol, Members, through their incumbent Broker, should also contact SIGCo with the vessel's name, U.S. port and the date of entry, and SIGCo in turn will advise the NPFC these details along with the date the vessel's guaranty and CG5585 application were sent to the NPFC. The NPFC, based on this confirmation, shall provide verbal clearance directly to the local port authority for the vessel to enter the U.S. port.

Furthermore, it is our understanding that if the political disagreement regarding funding has not been resolved by Friday February 15, 2019, there is a possibility that the U.S. Government will again temporarily shut down some of its administrative operations, which may once again include the NPFC.

As always, we remain at your disposal for any additional information you may require concerning this matter.

Nigel Shimmin
Vice President
SIGCo Group