



Department
for Transport

From the Parliamentary
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Dear colleague,

I recently wrote a short note of thanks in the publication Lloyds List to express my gratitude for everything you and your colleagues have done to support our country through this difficult time.

I am aware that not all of you will have seen my words as the article was behind paywall, so I wanted to share them with you below and echo once again how grateful we all are for everything you have done and continue to do for our country.

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Maritime sector is doing work of ‘national importance’ — UK Minister
UK Shipping Minister Kelly Tolhurst says the maritime sector’s response to the current health crisis has been ‘remarkable’

The Coronavirus outbreak is among the biggest challenges our transport industry has ever faced. While it’s essential that the vast majority of the population stays at home, I recognise that it’s not possible for many maritime and supply chain workers to do so. However, despite the unprecedented difficulties, the industry has responded magnificently, working round the clock to keep the nation fuelled, fed and supplied with vital goods.

As a result of your commitment and dedication we have the medicines we need. It means supermarket shelves across the country can be replenished every night. It means the nation is supplied with energy efficiently/without interruption. Furthermore, it means our ports can keep operating safely and efficiently. So, I want to pay tribute to all those in maritime who have gone out to work during this time of national crisis, from every port employee to every seafarer, we thank you all.

As workers doing a job of national importance, rest assured that your own health and safety remains of the utmost priority. That is why we’ve issued guidance for those working at ports and at sea to protect themselves and

minimise the potential for further infections. Thanks to your diligence and professionalism in following these guidelines, you have not only helped reduce the spread of the virus. You have also strengthened the resilience of the country and saved countless lives.

I also know how hard the virus has hit the cruise sector. I'm immensely grateful to all the operators who have worked tirelessly with us to bring passengers home safely.

We're in constant dialogue with the maritime industry to monitor progress and the changing nature of the outbreak. We've already made £330 billion available across the economy to help companies stay afloat, and we're providing non-working employees with up to 80% of their wage. We stand ready to take further action and bolster our support for the industry as the pandemic develops.

I know how challenging these past few weeks have been for every part of the maritime sector. Nevertheless, the way in which you have rallied and risen to the challenge has been remarkable.

There will be more difficult months ahead, however when we recover from this crisis, the whole nation will owe you a debt of gratitude for your outstanding service.

Yours sincerely,



KELLY TOLHURST MP

MINISTER FOR AVIATION, MARITIME AND SECURITY