

**STATEMENT OF CAPTAIN GEORGE WRIGHT
PRINCESS CRUISES**

**HOUSE TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COAST GUARD AND MARITIME TRANSPORTATION**

**Hearing on “A Review of Cruise Ship Safety and Lessons Learned
from the *Costa Concordia* Accident”**

February 29, 2012

Chairman LoBiondo, Ranking Member Larsen and Honorable Members of the Subcommittee, my name is George Wright and I currently serve as the Senior Vice President, Marine Operations, for Princess Cruises. Princess Cruises is one of Carnival Corporation’s wholly owned indirect subsidiaries. On behalf of the entire family of cruise lines owned by Carnival Corporation and Carnival plc (“Operating Companies”), let me say that all of us are deeply saddened by the tragic grounding of *Costa Concordia* in Italy. Our thoughts are with the passengers, the crew, and their families. The safety of our passengers and crew is our top priority. We work hard every day to achieve a high level of safety and we are committed to intensifying our efforts in this regard.

I joined Princess Cruises in June 2000, after a 27-year career with the U.S. Coast Guard. My last appointment was as Captain of the Port and Commanding Officer of the Marine Safety Office/Group Los Angeles/Long Beach. In this role, I was responsible for carrying out Coast Guard search and rescue, maritime environmental protection, law enforcement, marine safety, aids to navigation and national defense missions. I served as the Incident Commander and directed the immediate, massive multi-agency operational response to the tragic Alaska Airlines Flight 261 crash off the Southern California coast in January 2000.

During my Coast Guard career, I held a wide range of field and headquarters assignments. As Chief of the Office of Design and Engineering Standards, I was a member of the U.S. Delegation to the United Nations’ International Maritime Organization’s (“IMO”) Maritime Safety Committee and Design Equipment Subcommittee where I directed efforts to emphasize the role of the human element in preventing marine casualties through the U.S. Coast Guard’s “Prevention Through People” program. I am a graduate of the United States Coast Guard Academy and later received a master’s degree in mechanical engineering from the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California.

My mission at Princess Cruises is to lead a team to provide safe, secure and environmentally sound marine operations and support our ships. Princess has highly trained and motivated employees who focus on this mission every day. My focus at Princess is to operate our ships in compliance with rules and regulations set by the IMO, the United States and other countries, as well as local, state or regional regulations. We accomplish this through the establishment of policies and procedures that meet or exceed national and international requirements, and through training, audits, and inspections, both internal and external. In the United States, the U.S. Coast Guard is the Port State Control Authority with authority to board ships at any time. Regular U.S. Coast Guard inspections are conducted on cruise ships operating out of U.S. Ports at least twice a year.

A Safety Management System (“SMS”) is in place at Princess and at all of the other Operating Companies. Carnival Corporation and Carnival plc set standards and policies that comply with the requirements of the International Code for the Safe Management of Ships and for Pollution Prevention (“ISM Code”), which is incorporated into the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (“SOLAS”). The ISM Code requires ship operators to create and maintain a formal, documented SMS, which includes procedures, plans and instructions, including checklists as appropriate, for key shipboard operations concerning the safety of personnel, the ship and protection of the environment. Each Operating Company’s SMS is formally audited, internally and externally by the Flag State, and certificated, at both the Operating Company and ship levels. The SMS procedures, plans and instructions define various safety and other tasks and assign them to qualified personnel. In addition, Carnival Corporation and Carnival plc maintain a number of corporate standards in the health, environmental, safety and security areas, which are in excess of statutory requirements, and which all Operating Companies are required to follow.

Princess has strict standards for qualifications for Captains and other Deck Officers, which include formal training and years of experience at sea. Officers and crewmembers undergo regular safety and emergency training. Prior to being hired, our Deck Officers must be licensed to perform the functions required for their level of responsibility. Deck Officers must be certificated and trained in accordance with the requirements of the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping Convention (“STCW”). Non-licensed marine crew, as well as hotel and entertainment staff, must also be trained and certificated in accordance with STCW requirements mandated for their position on board. Depending on the type of training and certification required by STCW for their position, such training and certification may occur after hiring, but must be completed before they are allowed to start work aboard a vessel. In addition, all crewmembers must meet general criteria related to their specific job responsibilities on board.

Carnival Corporation and Carnival plc operate a Center for Simulator Maritime Training (CSMART) in Almere, Netherlands, which features a broad portfolio of maritime training courses. All senior Princess Deck Officers have attended simulator training.

Crewmembers play a role in safety, including musters, life boat drills, and evacuation. Each crewmember is given a safety briefing and instruction in their emergency duties when he or she signs onto the ship. They also participate in onboard safety drills, including fire and abandon ship drills, and attend at least one fire and abandon ship drill every month. Specific lifesaving and firefighting training is also provided in either shore based or shipboard programs.

On February 9, 2012, as part of the Cruise Lines International Association's ("CLIA") Cruise Industry Operational Safety Review following the *Costa Concordia* incident, a new muster policy, unanimously adopted by all CLIA member lines, was announced. This muster policy has now been voluntarily adopted and implemented by all Operating Companies. The new muster policy exceeds existing legal requirements by calling for the mandatory muster of all embarking passengers prior to departure from port. If passengers arrive on board after the muster has been completed, passengers will be promptly provided with individual or group safety briefings that meet the requirements for musters in accordance with SOLAS. This muster policy is designed to help ensure that mandatory musters or briefings are conducted for all new passengers at the earliest practical opportunity.

Princess regularly inspects its lifesaving and other safety equipment, lifeboats, and life jackets (PFDs) to check they are available and in good working condition. Standards and procedures are in place, pursuant to the ISM Code, to ensure that the vessels maintain onboard lifesaving equipment in accordance with SOLAS. SOLAS regulations require verification of operational readiness and maintenance, inspection, testing, and servicing of lifesaving appliances at weekly, monthly, annual, and other frequencies. The maintenance, inspection, testing, and servicing intervals vary for different types of equipment. Princess has established and implemented a planned maintenance system onboard its ships that ensures that we meet or exceed all requirements for operational readiness checks and maintenance, inspection, testing, and servicing of lifesaving appliances.

Princess regularly reviews its policies and procedures both ashore and on its ships to endeavor continuous improvement on the level of safety in our company. In addition, Carnival Corporation and Carnival plc announced a comprehensive audit and review of all safety and emergency response procedures across all of the Operating Companies to identify lessons learned and best practices to further ensure the safety of passengers and crew. Carnival

Corporation and Carnival plc have engaged outside industry experts in the fields of emergency response, organization, training and implementation to conduct this review in light of the *Costa Concordia* accident.

I appreciate the opportunity to appear before the Subcommittee today and look forward to answering your questions.

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
Truth in Testimony Disclosure

Pursuant to clause 2(g)(5) of House Rule XI, in the case of a witness appearing in a nongovernmental capacity, a written statement of proposed testimony shall include: (1) a curriculum vitae; and (2) a disclosure of the amount and source (by agency and program) of each Federal grant (or subgrant thereof) or contract (or subcontract thereof) received during the current fiscal year or either of the two previous fiscal years by the witness or by an entity represented by the witness. Such statements, with appropriate redaction to protect the privacy of the witness, shall be made publicly available in electronic form not later than one day after the witness appears.

(1) Name:

Captain George F. Wright

(2) Other than yourself, name of entity you are representing:

Princess Cruise Lines, Ltd.

(3) Are you testifying on behalf of an entity other than a Government (federal, state, local) entity?

YES

If yes, please provide the information requested below and attach your curriculum vitae.

NO

(4) Please list the amount and source (by agency and program) of each Federal grant (or subgrant thereof) or contract (or subcontract thereof) received during the current fiscal year or either of the two previous fiscal years by you or by the entity you are representing:

N/A

Signature

Date

George F. Wright

2/27/12

Biography

Captain George F. Wright

Sr. Vice President Marine Operations

Sr. Vice President of Marine Operations George Wright is responsible for overseeing several vital aspects of Princess' operating practice, including Marine, Safety, Environmental, and Security.

Wright joined Princess in 2000 after a respected 27-year career with the U.S. Coast Guard. His last appointment was as Captain of the Port and Commanding Officer of the Marine Safety Office/Group for Los Angeles/Long Beach, an area of responsibility ranging from Monterey to San Diego. In this role he was responsible for carrying out Coast Guard search and rescue, maritime environmental protection, law enforcement, marine safety, aids to navigation and national defense.

During his Coast Guard career, Wright held a wide range of field assignments, including various positions at the organization's Marine Safety offices in Baltimore and San Francisco. From 1988 to 1992 he served as engineering division chief at the Coast Guard's Washington, DC headquarters. After three years as the Commanding Officer and Captain of the Port of the Marine Safety Office in San Diego, he returned to Washington to complete a two-year assignment as Chief of the Office of Design and Engineering Standards, where he directed efforts to emphasize the role of the human element in preventing marine casualties through the Coast Guard's "Prevention Through People" program.

He began his career with icebreaker duty aboard the Coast Guard cutter *Burton Island*, with assignments in the Arctic and Antarctica.

- more -

Wright graduated from the United States Coast Guard Academy with a Bachelor of Science degree and was commissioned as an Ensign in 1973. He later received a master's degree in mechanical engineering from the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California.

His awards include the Coast Guard's Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal, Commendation Medal, Achievement Medal and several Unit Commendation ribbons.

###