



Peter Franchot  
*Comptroller*

April 14, 2022

Mr. Benjamin Tsai  
President  
Evergreen Shipping Agency (America) Corporation  
One Evertrust Plaza, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Jersey City, New Jersey 07302

Dear Mr. Tsai:

As the elected comptroller of the State of Maryland, I write to express my strong and continued concerns regarding potential economic and environmental impacts to Maryland and the region resulting from one of your cargo ships, *Ever Forward*, running aground in the Chesapeake Bay.

Yesterday marked one month from when *Ever Forward* got stuck in the Chesapeake as it embarked on its voyage from the Port of Baltimore to Norfolk, Virginia. Since then, several federal, state, and local governmental agencies have worked around the clock, employing every effort to refloat the ship. Despite those efforts, your ship remains stuck under 40 feet of mud according to some estimates.

While it remains to be known how the *Ever Forward* ran aground in the first place, one thing is conclusive: this incident has caused, and potentially could cause more, environmental damage to the Chesapeake Bay. While we do not know the full scope of the environmental impact thus far, a 131,420-ton ship – carrying tons of cargo and fuel – getting stuck in our waters undoubtedly has resulted in disruptions to the Bay's fragile ecosystem.

As you know, among the efforts that were employed was to dredge near and around the ship to refloat the ship. While this may have been a necessary action, among its potential consequences include damage to oyster beds and disruptions to spawning season for several species that our seafood industry – already struggling economically due to labor shortages – will harvest in the coming months. As if these environmental disruptions are not bad enough, the very real danger of a hull breach and an oil spill is top of mind for me, and for so many leaders and Marylanders across our state. Such an incident would be an environmental and economic catastrophe for the state, the region, and the country.

Maryland leaders at all levels of government have worked hard over many years to secure resources and implement policies to restore the health and vitality of the Chesapeake that generations of Marylanders have depended on for recreation and for their livelihoods. The damage that this incident has already caused – and could potentially continue to cause – will require financial resources to correct.

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Therefore, I am calling on Evergreen to establish an initial \$100 million Responsibility Fund now, from which relevant parties can begin receiving compensation or reimbursement for the impact this incident has caused. This includes reimbursement for labor hours and resources that federal, state, and local agencies have directed towards this effort, and potential compensation for watermen and the seafood industry for this incident's impact on their harvest season. The establishment of this fund will send a clear message that Evergreen is a good faith actor; understands the environmental and economic damage this incident has caused to the State of Maryland; and truly lives up to its commitment to environmental protection as [outlined in your website](#).

It is my sincere hope that Evergreen takes this action as expeditiously as possible, and begins to correct the wrongs this incident caused to our Bay and our residents who depend on it for their livelihoods.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Franchot". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

PETER FRANCHOT  
Comptroller of Maryland

CC: The Honorable Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr.  
Governor