

## US state of Maryland seeks \$100m from Evergreen over Ever Forward grounding

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The State of Maryland has asked Taiwan-based Evergreen, the operator of grounded giant container ship **Ever Forward** (IMO 9850551), to create a “responsibility fund” of \$100m to pay for costs related to the month-long grounding of the vessel in Chesapeake Bay, off Maryland’s major port, Baltimore.

Maryland comptroller Peter Franchot said in a letter to Benjamin Tsai, president of Evergreen Shipping Agency (America) Corporation that “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.”

The \$100m fund would exist to cover the environment-related costs, as well as economic costs, in particular for the seafood industry. “The damage that this incident has already caused – and could potentially continue to cause – will require financial resources to correct,” wrote Franchot.

Franchot added that, while the dredging undertaken to help free the ship could have been necessary, among its potential consequences were damage to oyster beds and disruptions to the spawning season for several species that Maryland’s seafood industry would harvest in the coming months.

Franchot said money from the fund would potentially compensate workers in the seafood industry if they were impacted and pay the cost of labour for employees from federal, state and local agencies involved in refloating the ship.

2020-built, Hong Kong-flagged, 117,340 gt Ever Forward is owned and managed by Evergreen Marine Corporation of Taoyuan City, China. It is entered with Gard P&I on behalf of Evergreen Marine (HK) Ltd.