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PRESS RELEASE

Text of the D.O. Letter No.659/CMO/2021, Dated 21-6-2021 of Thiru M.K. Stalin, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu addressed to Chief Ministers of 9 States (Gujarat / Maharashtra / Goa / Karnataka / Kerala / Andhra Pradesh / Odisha / West Bengal / Puducherry) on "Draft Indian Ports Bill, 2021":

I invite your kind attention to the recent actions initiated by the Government of India on management of Minor Ports, hitherto managed and regulated by State Governments. As you are aware, the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways has framed a new "Draft Indian Ports Bill 2021" to modify the current management model of minor ports and a meeting of the Maritime State Development Council (MSDC) has been called with the State Ministers on 24th June 2021 to discuss this bill.

As per the existing Indian Ports Act, 1908, the powers to plan, develop, regulate and control the minor ports vests with the State Governments concerned. However, the new draft Indian Ports Bill 2021 proposes to change this and transfer many of these powers to MSDC, which has so far been only an advisory body. Further to this, many powers currently exercised by State Governments would be taken over by the Union Government.

You will agree that the present system has led to good development of minor ports, under the States. This move of the Central Government to bring a new Bill will have long term adverse implications on the management of minor ports, since the State Governments will not have any major role anymore, if the Bill is passed. We have already taken up the issue with the Union Ministry for Ports and Shipping, strongly opposing such steps to

reduce the autonomous role of States in the regulation and management of Minor Ports.

Therefore, I propose that all the Coastal States and Union Territories should express their objection to this new draft Indian Ports Bill 2021 and take joint action to prevent any move to dilute the powers already vested with the States. I also request that, all our State Governments must communicate these comments on similar lines, opposing the above bill during the MSDC Meeting on 24th June 2021.

Issued By: - DIPR, Secretariat, Chennai - 9.