

## Baltimore takes Dali owner and manager to court

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NTSB

Singaporean shipowner Grace Ocean and shipmanager Synergy Group face trial in Baltimore after lawyers for the city filed a case yesterday, claiming the ship that knocked over a huge bridge killing six people last month had left port with "unseaworthy" conditions.

The legal battle over the *Dali* containership's fatal collision with the Francis Scott Key Bridge on March 26 will be long and costly. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has launched its own criminal inquiry into the accident while the shipowner and manager had earlier this month filed a federal lawsuit earlier denying responsibility for the accident and seeking to limit the total payout to \$43.7m. Lawyers representing the city of Baltimore fired back yesterday, hitting out at what they see as "negligence" leading to this year's most headline-grabbing shipping accident.

"Reporting has indicated that, even before leaving port, alarms showing inconsistent power supply on the *Dali* had sounded," a lawyer for the city of Baltimore said in the filing. "The *Dali* left port anyways despite its clearly unseaworthy condition."

The city also accuses the crew of being incompetent and inattentive to their duties, adding allegations of failing to maintain or use several pieces of equipment, including the ship's engine and propulsion system.

Grace Ocean and Synergy have yet to file a response to the allegations.

*Dali's* voyager data recorder showed power failed for just one minute and three seconds as it approached the bridge, and that the lead pilot tried to swing the 300 m long vessel clear of a collision by dropping its port anchor to pivot it away.

The 9,962 teu *Dali* containership has been pinned down under mangled steel in the Patapsco River since March 26. Salvors have managed to open three shallow channels with tons of steel from the bridge removed.



Yesterday saw the arrival of a 1,000-tonne hydraulic grab (pictured), which will help speed up removal of the downed bridge.

The official bridge clean-up team has provided an update (see below) of what parts of the bridge have been cleared in the near one month since the accident with authorities saying they aim to get the port back to full operating capacity by the end of May.

