



*A bold voice for transportation workers*

October 8, 2015

**Oppose the Amash Amendment to H.R. 702**

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), I urge you to oppose the Amash amendment to H.R. 702, the crude oil export bill. While TTD is not taking a position on the underlying legislation due to a lack of consensus between our affiliated unions, we have long worked with our member unions to boost funding for the Maritime Security Program (MSP). This ideologically driven amendment, which would repeal this necessary funding increase for MSP and threaten the program, would harm our nation's sealift capacity and jeopardize national security and middle class American jobs.

Since its establishment in the 1990s, the MSP has allowed the U.S. government to contract with the owners of 60 privately-owned and military useful U.S.-flag vessels, their international logistics networks, and civilian U.S. citizen crews to support the Department of Defense's (DOD) needs. Under the MSP, the government provides an annual retainer payment for each U.S.-flag commercial vessel enrolled in MSP. In return, these vessels carry cargo during wars and national emergencies, providing a reliable and safe means to transport goods during vulnerable and extremely challenging times. Without MSP, the military would be forced to rely on foreign flag ships, which may not possess the readiness, capabilities or loyalties necessary to carryout vital transport missions.

In addition to providing military support, the MSP's reliance on U.S.-flag vessels supports thousands of good-paying jobs. In fact, the 60 vessels currently participating in MSP support approximately 2,700 U.S. mariners and an additional 5,000 shore-side jobs. By incentivizing vessels to fly the U.S. flag, this program keeps our maritime sector strong and maintains a pool of skilled and specialized American mariners.

In fact, contrary to baseless arguments put forward by supporters of the Amash amendment, the MSP is an incredibly cost effective and efficient program. Without the assured access to the vessels, crews and related intermodal assets that MSP provides, DOD would need to spend \$65 billion to replicate the logistical and vessel services provided by the program.

MSP is an indispensable program that supports the U.S. military and other national strategic objectives, and helps maintain thousands of jobs for skilled American mariners. For these reasons, we urge you to reject the Amash Amendment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Edward Wytkind', written over a light blue circular stamp.

Edward Wytkind  
President

**Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO**

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Edward Wytkind, President / Larry I. Willis, Secretary-Treasurer