



*A bold voice for transportation workers*

January 16, 2015

### **Oppose the McCain Jones Act Amendment**

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), I urge you to oppose an amendment filed by Senator John McCain to S.1, the Keystone XL Pipeline Act. This ideologically driven amendment, which seeks to repeal components of the Jones Act, would outsource American jobs; jeopardize our domestic shipping industry; undermine our nation's economic, national and homeland security and has no place during a debate over energy policy.

U.S. maritime cabotage laws – collectively known as the Jones Act – have served an indispensable role promoting our nation's economic and national security since 1920. This amendment, which would repeal the requirement that vessels operating between U.S. ports be built in U.S., would decimate the nation's shipping industry. The rationale for this amendment, in the words of Senator McCain, is to “spur the economy.” This could not be further from the truth. By removing the build provision of the Jones Act, the amendment would eliminate 400,000 U.S. jobs, reduce GDP by \$36 billion, and erase \$24 billion in American workers' wages and benefits. In fact, the only parties that stand to benefit from this amendment are heavily subsidized foreign shipping competitors who are not subject to U.S. laws, regulations, environmental standards, and taxes.

This amendment would also undermine the Jones Act's central function to protect our national security by destabilizing the military's strategic sealift needs. The Jones Act ensures that the U.S. has a reliable source of domestically built ships and skilled American crews available for its military and humanitarian aid operations. Absent these laws, the U.S. Armed Forces will be forced to rely on foreign-flag ships and crews with unknown loyalties or strategic objectives to transport critical military cargo and personnel to overseas operations.

Finally, we categorically reject this amendment's suitability for a vote on energy policy and believe Congress would be making historic policy changes absent proper committee consideration or review. The decision to expedite the Keystone XL pipeline has nothing to do with maritime policy, and this amendment serves no purpose germane to the pipeline project. Put simply, Senator McCain is hijacking a debate on energy policy in service of an ideological agenda with the hope of ending cabotage protections to the benefit of foreign shipping interests.

For these reasons, we urge that you reject the McCain Amendment. Please contact me directly or TTD Legislative Representative Jeff Pavlak at 202/628-9262, if you have any questions about this amendment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Edward Wytkind', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Edward Wytkind  
President

#### **Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO**

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