



*A bold voice for transportation workers*

March 27, 2023

### **Support Maritime Security Program Funding in FY'24 THUD Appropriations**

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), and the many maritime workers that we represent, I urge you to sign the bipartisan Dear Colleague letter being circulated by Senator Mazie Hirono (D-HI) and Senator Roger Wicker (R-MS) requesting the fully authorized level of \$318,000,000 for the Maritime Security Program (MSP) in the FY 2024 Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development appropriations bill.

The Maritime Security Program is an essential component of our military sealift capability because it guarantees that trained U.S. citizen mariners will be available in times of crisis or disaster. The program provides a stipend to commercial shipping companies to enable them to continue sailing U.S.-flag vessels, at a fraction of the cost it would take the federal government to replicate similar maritime shipping capacity. The dual public health and global security crises caused by COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine are a meaningful reminder that the United States should be in control of our commercial goods, energy production, and cargo transportation needs.

This capacity is indispensable to both our security and humanitarian efforts, but it is also a key element in promoting good middle-class jobs in the maritime sector. In a world without a U.S. fleet, jobs currently performed by U.S. mariners would be outsourced to countries without labor and safety protections, where mariners work under poor conditions for little pay. MSP helps to ensure that the U.S. mariner pool remains robust and that our nation will be able to preserve the existence of a domestic maritime industry and the substantial economic benefits it imparts.

For these reasons, we urge you to sign the Hirono-Wicker FY'24 MSP appropriations letter, which requests full funding of the program to provide the necessary support for our military sealift capacity and the U.S. commercial maritime sector.

**Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO**

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Greg Regan, President / Shari Semelsberger, Secretary-Treasurer



Senate THUD deadline is Thursday, April 6. Please see staff contacts and text of letter below.

Riley Johnson at [Riley\\_Johnson@hirono.senate.gov](mailto:Riley_Johnson@hirono.senate.gov) with Senator Hirono  
Andrew Bichlmeier at [Andrew\\_Bichlmeier@wicker.senate.gov](mailto:Andrew_Bichlmeier@wicker.senate.gov) with Senator Wicker

Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Regan", written over a circular stamp or seal.

Greg Regan  
President

**DRAFT -- MONTH XX, 2023**

The Honorable Patty Murray, Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins, Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Brian Schatz, Chairman  
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban  
Development, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Cindy Hyde-Smith, Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban  
Development, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Murray, Ranking Member Collins, Chairman Schatz and Ranking Member Hyde-Smith:

We are writing to request that you fund the Maritime Security Program (MSP) at the authorized level in the FY 2024 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies (THUD) Appropriations Bill.

MSP is a vital component of our military strategic sealift and global response capability. It is designed to ensure that the United States has U.S.-flag commercial sealift capability and trained U.S. citizen merchant mariners available in times of war or national emergencies. MSP also ensures that the U.S. can provide our troops overseas with the supplies and equipment they need to do their jobs on behalf of our nation.

MSP is a cost-effective public-private partnership between the U.S. government and the U.S.-flag shipping industry. The program uses existing U.S. maritime private-sector capabilities at a fraction of the cost of what it would require of the federal government. MSP contractors, who continuously develop and maintain modern logistics systems, are able to provide enhanced vessel capacity and global intermodal transportation systems to the Department of Defense. The cost to the federal government of replicating the vessels and intermodal system is estimated at least \$65 billion.

Without a viable U.S.-flag commercial fleet and the American merchant mariners this fleet supports, the United States would be unable to deploy military forces on a global scale and deliver the supplies and equipment American troops need to do their job on behalf of the American people.

We ask that you continue to support this highly efficient and low-cost public-private partnership at the authorized level as you consider funding levels for FY 2024 in your subcommittee's appropriations bill.

Thank you for your consideration of this request