



April 9, 2024

Dear Representative:

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 Representatives Joe Courtney (D-CT), Robert Wittman (R-VA), and Trent Kelly (R-MS) requesting full funding for the Maritime Security Program (MSP) at the authorized amount in the Fiscal Year 2025 Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development (THUD) appropriations bill. We also request that a defense 302(b) allocation in the authorized amount be provided to the THUD Appropriations Subcommittee to ensure sufficient funding for MSP as has been done in preceding years.

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 wars in Ukraine and the Middle East 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 Courtney-Wittman-Kelly FY'25 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.

To join this letter, please follow [THIS LINK](#) to sign the letter via Quill. Please contact Sean Falvey on Rep. Courtney's staff at Sean.Falvey@mail.house.gov, Reed Craddock on Rep. Kelly's staff at Reed.Craddock@mail.house.gov, or Hallie Coyne on Rep. Wittman's staff at Hallie.Coyne@mail.house.gov if you have any questions or encounter any issues. Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,

Greg Regan
President





[[DATE]]

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing,
and Urban Development, and Related Agencies
2358-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mike Quigley
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing,
and Urban Development, and Related Agencies
2083 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member Quigley:

We are writing to request that your Subcommittee once again include full funding at the authorized amount for the Maritime Security Program (MSP) in your Fiscal Year 2025 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies (THUD) Appropriations Bill. We also request that a defense 302(b) allocation in the authorized amount be provided to the THUD Appropriations Subcommittee to ensure sufficient funding for MSP as has been done in preceding years.

MSP is a vital component of our military strategic sealift and global response capability. It is designed to ensure that the United States has the U.S.-flag commercial sealift readiness 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 necessary to do their jobs on behalf of our nation.

In testimony on March 28, 2023 before the House Armed Services Committee's Readiness and Seapower and Projection Forces Subcommittees, General Jacqueline D. Van Ovost, Commander of the United States Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM), emphasized the importance of MSP, "with the assured access provided by the 60-ship U.S. flag sealift vessel Maritime Security Program, and increased funding to preserve the operational readiness of the U.S. government-owned ships in the Ready Reserve Force, we will bolster our ability to conduct operations at sea and meet DOD requirements with the most useful capacity while maintaining a U.S. flag presence in international trade. This capacity and global reach through integrated networks provided by our industry partners is critical when we consider a theater such as USINDOPACOM." At that hearing, Rear Admiral Ann Phillips, Administrator of the Maritime Administration (MARAD) stated, "there are 60 commercially viable, militarily useful vessels enrolled in MSP. These vessels are active in international trade and are on-call to meet the nation's need for sustained military sealift capacity. The MSP supports and sustains the merchant mariner base by providing employment for 2,400 highly trained, skilled U.S. merchant mariners who may also crew the U.S. Government-owned surge sealift fleet when activated. The MSP also supports more than 5,000 additional shore-side jobs in the maritime industry."

As a public-private partnership between the U.S. government and the U.S.-flag shipping industry, MSP provides the Department of Defense (DOD) assured access to privately-owned commercial shipping assets, related global intermodal systems, and the active pool of U.S citizen mariners necessary to support America's defense objectives around the world. This cost-effective program utilizes existing U.S. maritime private sector capabilities at a

fraction of the cost of what it would take if the Federal government were to replicate the vessel capacity and global intermodal systems made available to DOD by MSP contractors who continuously develop and maintain modern logistics systems for commercial and defense purposes. The cost to the Federal government of replicating just the vessel capacity is estimated at \$13 billion. USTRANSCOM has estimated an additional cost of \$52 billion to replicate the global intermodal system that is made available to the DOD by MSP participants. In contrast, the MSP, at the funding level requested, will provide DOD with U.S.-flag, U.S.-crewed militarily-useful commercial vessels and worldwide logistics systems at a fraction of the estimated \$65 billion it would cost the Federal government to do this job itself.

In closing, without a viable U.S.-flag commercial fleet and the American merchant mariners this fleet supports, the United States would be unable to deploy its military forces on a global basis and to deliver the supplies and equipment American troops need to do their job on behalf of the American people.
Thank you for your consideration of this request.

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