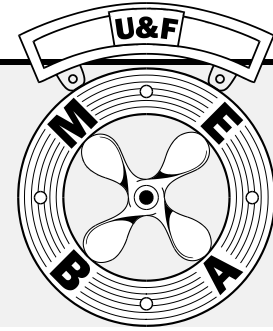


# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

*MARCH 2019*



The Governor of Puerto Rico has petitioned the Department of Homeland Security for a 10-year Jones Act waiver to allow the shipment of American Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) to the island aboard foreign-flagged LNG carriers. Puerto Rico is making a push to convert most of its power generators from diesel fuel to natural gas. Governor Ricardo Rossello Nevaes said that there are no Jones Act eligible LNG carriers among 478 such vessels worldwide. The waiver is conditional upon the continued non-availability of Jones Act LNG carriers and would expire if one becomes available. The Governor noted that without a waiver, the island would be unable to purchase American natural gas and instead would rely on foreign sources. Puerto Rico has long been an opponent of the Jones Act erroneously citing it as a major cause of their island's economic woes. In recent years they made hay with a biased Puerto Rico-commissioned study heralding alternate "facts" condemning the Jones Act. Puerto Rico commonly dismisses the non-partisan U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) study that discredited much of the Puerto Rico report as well as subsequent reports debunking many other anti-Jones Act claims.

Congressional leaders in the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure penned a letter to DHS Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen opposing the Governor's waiver request and urging its dismissal. The letter was signed by Committee Chairman Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-OR) and Ranking Member Rep. Sam Graves (R-MO), as well as the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Sean Patrick Maloney (D-NY) and Subcommittee Ranking Member Rep. Bob Gibbs (R-OH). Ten members of Congress from the Florida delegation also voiced their opposition to DHS. Saying a waiver would negatively affect Florida's maritime industry, the House Members also asserted that it would "compromise our nation's ability to respond in time of natural disaster or military contingency because the waiver would undermine the very foundation of the law itself." The lawmakers also are not convinced that a waiver would end up providing a benefit to Puerto Rico.

## **SUPPORT THE JONES ACT!**

Members, applicants and retirees are invited to let Congress know how important the Jones Act is to the nation's economy and national security. A pair of web links will help you easily cobble together and dispatch a message to Congress urging them to stand up for this important statute that helps keep the U.S.-flag fleet afloat. There are frequent challenges to the tried-and-true Merchant Marine Act of 1920 by ignorant or unknowledgeable sources who typically recommend paring down, waiving or repealing the Act. Their arguments are mirrored by overseas shipping interests who would love to replace American workers and gain access to the U.S. domestic maritime trade. The loss of the Jones Act would give the green light to open up our coasts and inland waterways to foreign ships and mariners. While U.S. ships and seafarers are subject to strict Coast Guard licensing and documentation standards that ensure that safe practices are adhered to, our foreign counterparts are not.

Navy League has an easy, pre-formatted (but editable) Jones Act letter that you can sign onto and send to your Congressional delegation in a few clicks. You can get to it by visiting <https://tinyurl.com/y3ysgpk4> Another Jones Act letter, set up by the American Maritime Partnership, achieves the same effect. Visit <https://tinyurl.com/y2yd72y7> to get to the AMP letter. Five minutes of your time can really make a difference.