

March 19, 2020

The Honorable Peter DeFazio, Chairman
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Adam Smith, Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sam Graves, Ranking
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mac Thornberry, Ranking
Committee on Armed Services
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen DeFazio and Smith and Ranking Members Graves and Thornberry:

As you may be aware, a number of groups and individuals are attempting to use the current Coronavirus pandemic as a rationale to waive one or more of our nation's maritime cabotage laws. We strongly oppose such efforts and ask your help to ensure that such harmful, unwarranted and unjustifiable waivers of the cabotage laws are not included in the various stimulus packages designed to help the American worker and American industries.

At a time where American workers and their families are facing economic hardship, this public health crisis should not be exploited to the benefit of foreign-flagged industries that do not employ American workers, avoid paying U.S. taxes, pay substandard wages to their foreign employees and want to use these hard times to break into our nation's vital industries. We oppose any efforts to waive the Jones Act that would undermine the wellbeing of American mariners and the domestic maritime workforce. When this crisis is over, irresponsibly weakening the foundational laws governing the U.S. maritime industry would only contribute to the growing loss of American jobs to foreign interests.

We thank you for your consistent support for the American maritime worker and appreciate your efforts to protect American maritime jobs.

Marshall Ainley, President, Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association
Dave Connolly, President, Sailors' Union of the Pacific
Paul Doell, President, American Maritime Officers
Dan Duncan, Secretary-Treasurer, AFL-CIO Maritime Trades Department
Don Marcus, President, International Organization of Masters, Mates & Pilots
Anthony Poplawski, President/Secretary Treasurer, Marine Firemen's Union
Michael Sacco, President, Seafarers International Union
Marina Secchitano, President, Inlandboatmen's Union of the Pacific
Larry Willis, President, Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO

cc: The Hon. Sean Patrick Maloney, Chairman, Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation
The Honorable Joe Courtney, Chairman, Seapower and Projection Forces
The Honorable Bob Gibbs, Ranking, Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation
The Honorable Rob Wittman, Ranking, Seapower and Projection Forces