

MARITIME LABOR ALLIANCE



THE MARITIME LABOR ALLIANCE SUPPORTS THE CITIZENS OF PUERTO RICO

September 28, 2017

The humanitarian crisis in Puerto Rico is one that requires the full resources and cooperation of all Americans. The men and women of the United State maritime industry, which includes several thousand Puerto Ricans, are deeply committed to providing the relief that is necessary for the people of the Island. The domestic maritime industry has risen to the occasion.

Contrary to misinformation spread in the media, the current crisis in Puerto Rico, has nothing to do with the Jones Act. There is no shortage of U.S.-flag tonnage available to serve the Island. The emergency in Puerto Rico is caused by lack of the ability to distribute critical supplies, food, medicine, water and fuel to local communities from the ports where these supplies are located.

The Maritime Labor Alliance insists on setting the record straight. Our alliance consists of six leading maritime labor unions: American Radio Association (ARA), Inlandboatmen's Union (IBU), International Longshoremen's Association (ILA), International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association (MEBA), and International Organization of Masters, Mates & Pilots (MM&P). The facts are as follows:

- 1. The Jones Act does not prohibit foreign vessels from transporting supplies to Puerto Rico.** In fact, nearly two-thirds of the vessels calling in Puerto Rico are foreign flag and nearly all of the fuel transported to Puerto Rico is delivered aboard foreign flag vessels.
- 2. Maritime labor does not oppose Jones Act waivers in emergencies when there have not been enough U.S. flag ships available to transport cargo between U.S. ports.** There are currently fifteen U.S.-flag ships and U.S.-flag oceangoing tug/barge combinations regularly serving Puerto Rico. These vessels alone are now bringing in more supplies than can be distributed ashore. Other U.S. flag commercial vessels are available and over sixty government owned reserve cargo vessels that can be called into action and fully operational with 72 hours.
- 3. If a shortage of available shipping hinders relief efforts in the future, the undersigned organizations will fully support a temporary Jones Act waiver.**

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4. **Spreading falsehoods about the Jones Act is harmful to the economic and military security of the United States.** The Jones Act facilitates regular, reliable shipping services between the Island and other U.S. ports and at the same time promotes jobs for Puerto Ricans and other Americans, while safeguarding the United States shipbuilding industry and merchant marine in times of peace and war.

We the undersigned organizations, pledge our solidarity with the people of Puerto Rico, many of whom are in our ranks.

Sincerely,

Kelly Anderson, President
ARA

Alan Cote, President
IBU

Harold Daggett, President
ILA

Robert McEllrath, President
ILWU

Marshall Ainley, President
MEBA

Don Marcus, President
MM&P

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Together, we represent 120,000 maritime workers employed in every sector of the industry. Members of MLA unions have served the country on the docks and at sea in peace and war from 1875 to today.