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Maritime Labor Leaders Push Back on 60-Day Jones Act Waiver

Washington, D.C. — A coalition of U.S. maritime labor organizations, including the American Maritime Officers; American Radio Association; International Organization of Masters, Mates and Pilots; Marine Firemen’s Union; Marine Engineers’ Beneficial Association; Maritime Trades Department, AFL-CIO; Sailors’ Union of the Pacific; Seafarers International Union; and the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO, today expressed alarm regarding the Trump Administration’s decision to issue a sweeping 60-day waiver of the Jones Act in the following statement:

“America’s maritime labor unions are deeply concerned about the Administration’s broad Jones Act waiver, which undermines our national security, weakens military readiness, and hands critical maritime work to foreign vessel operators. Jones Act waivers are intended to meet a strict legal standard and are traditionally granted only in narrow, clearly defined national security emergencies where U.S.-flag capacity is unavailable. Maritime labor has supported narrowly tailored Jones Act waivers in the past when they were obviously justified in the national interest, but this sweeping action does not meet that standard.”

“At a time of heightened global instability where American sailors are being targeted in the Persian Gulf and surrounding areas, opening U.S. waterways to foreign adversaries through an expansive Jones Act waiver further jeopardizes America’s safety and security in open waters. Such action only permits more abuse of our nation’s cabotage laws and sends a damaging signal about the nation’s commitment to sustain a strong U.S. maritime industry and workforce.”

“To be clear, this decision will not provide meaningful relief at the gas pump. It has been plainly shown that the primary driver of gasoline prices remains the global cost of crude oil, and multiple analyses demonstrate that domestic shipping accounts for less than one cent per gallon. Any marginal savings will not reach consumers but will instead reward foreign shipping interests at the expense of American workers.”

“Maritime labor calls on the Administration to reverse course and work with stakeholders on real solutions that address energy costs without sacrificing American jobs, national security, or the long-term strength of the U.S. maritime industrial base.”

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