White House Extends Jones Act Waiver

The White House will further extend the ongoing Jones Act waiver to allow foreign-flag interests to continue taking American shipping jobs under the guise of saving money at the gas pumps. By next week, two consecutive blanket Jones Act waivers will have sidelined U.S.-flag shipping for a record 150 days. These overly-broad waivers have permitted foreign-flagged ships to move oil, liquefied natural gas, fertilizer, coal, and over 600 other products between U.S. ports, a privilege that should be reserved for Americans, not foreign interests who have happily swooped in to take over our jobs. The Administration announced yet another extension of the waiver on Monday (8/10), this one for another 90-days, doubling down on a policy that continues to undercut the U.S.-flag fleet and American maritime jobs. This next waiver goes into effect following the expiration of the second waiver on August 16. It will be narrower in scope, requiring individual voyages to be reviewed and approved on a case-by-case basis.

A recent Navigistics study concluded that a Jones Act waiver reduces the national average gasoline price by just $0.0027 per gallon. That's less than a third of a penny. Meanwhile, the Jones Act supports a strong U.S.-flag fleet, sustains hundreds of thousands of family-supporting maritime jobs, and is vital to national security by guaranteeing the U.S. military can rely on American vessels and skilled mariners in times of conflict and crises.

The latest news continues to raise serious questions about the Administration's commitment to rebuilding America's maritime strength. The waivers stand in stark contrast to President Trump's promises to restore American shipbuilding, strengthen the U.S. Merchant Marine, and put American workers first. While the Administration has championed new shipbuilding initiatives and called for revitalizing the maritime sector, allowing foreign-flag ships to continue performing work reserved for U.S.-flag vessels undermines those very objectives. America cannot rebuild its merchant fleet while simultaneously waiving away the laws designed to sustain it. Repeatedly suspending those protections sends the opposite message: that foreign shipping can replace American mariners and operators whenever it is politically convenient.

Every additional waiver deprives U.S.-flag operators of cargo, weakens the economic foundation needed to sustain American crews, discourages investment in the domestic fleet, and further erodes the maritime industrial base that military leaders have repeatedly said is essential to national security.

The Jones Act waiver is handing foreign shipping companies exactly what they want: American cargo, bigger profits, and a further competitive advantage built on the backs of U.S. mariners and the domestic maritime industry.