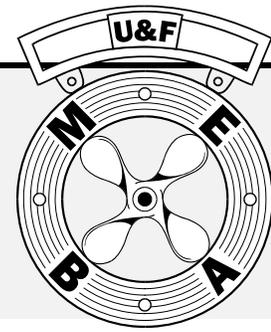


LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

MAY 2021



Over 90 Bipartisan House Members Urge Full Funding for Maritime Security Program – On April 30, a group of 93 bipartisan congressional lawmakers urged the House Appropriations Committee to include \$318 million dollars for Fiscal Year 2022 to fully fund the 60 vessels enrolled in the Maritime Security Program (MSP). The letter cites MSP as a “...vital component of our military strategic sealift and global response capability. It is designed to ensure that the United States has the U.S.-flag commercial sealift capability and trained U.S. citizen merchant mariners available in times of war or national emergencies.”

M.E.B.A. members may recall that the life of the Maritime Security Program was recently extended through 2035 due to extensive lobbying efforts to both political parties by the Union, that was enacted in the Fiscal Year 2020 National Defense Authorization Act. However, funding must be continually secured through separate enactments of subsequent appropriations bills. The high number of signatories reflects continued efforts by the M.E.B.A. and industry stakeholders to successfully engage lawmakers through virtual meetings over the past year during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Senate Commerce Committee Advances Legislation to Address Icebreaking Needs in the Great Lakes – On April 28th, the Senate Commerce Committee approved S. 576, the Great Lakes Winter Commerce Act with a substitute amendment. Specifically, the bill would direct the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to evaluate the economic impacts of inadequate icebreaking in the Great, Lakes, identify a U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) icebreaker fleet mix to meet proposed standards, describe personnel and operating costs required, and recommend improvements to the USCG’s icebreaking program with respect to facilitating commerce and meeting USCG mission needs. The amended legislation would also authorize \$350 million in Fiscal Year 2022 for the acquisition of a new Great Lakes icebreaker as capable as the USCGC MACKINAW vessel. According to a study by the Lake Carriers Association, which represents M.E.B.A.-contracted Interlake Steamship Company, the economy lost over \$2 billion and more than 10,000 jobs over the last seven years due to Great Lakes cargo being delayed or even left at the dock with no assistance available to safely move ships through the ice.