



UNITED STATES TRANSPORTATION COMMAND

508 SCOTT DRIVE
SCOTT AIR FORCE BASE, ILLINOIS 62225-5357

19 August 2013

**The Honorable J. Randy Forbes
Chairman, Subcommittee on Seapower and
Projection Forces
U.S. House Armed Services Committee
Washington DC 20515**

Dear Mr. Chairman

Thank you for your letter of July 30 regarding the potential impacts of a Fiscal Year 2014 Continuing Resolution and sequestration on the U.S. Merchant Marine and the Maritime Security Program (MSP). USTRANSCOM relies heavily on the significant capabilities the U.S. Flag commercial sealift industry contributes to our nation.

USTRANSCOM agrees with the Maritime Administration's (MARAD) assessment of potential vessel losses to MSP. In addition to specific vessel capacity lost, the loss of mariner jobs, access to the related intermodal logistics networks these companies provide, and potential loss of competition in certain trade routes may degrade our current support to forces deployed overseas and likely increase transportation costs to the government.

Additionally, the loss of commercial capability, combined with potential reductions to our organic sealift fleet due to fiscal cuts, heightens my readiness concerns. I understand the challenging and difficult decisions being made during these fiscally-constrained times. However, concurrent degradation to both commercial and organic fleets may hinder our future ability to timely deploy and sustain our forces and project national power when required.

Please feel free to contact me at (618) 229-3205, or my Legislative Affairs Office at (618) 220-1169, if you or your staff needs any assistance.

Very respectfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "William M. Fraser III", is positioned above the typed name.

**WILLIAM M. FRASER III
General, USAF
Commander**

cc:

**The Honorable Anthony Foxx
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation**