

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 2014

The Honorable Tom Latham
Chairman
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and
Urban Development, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ed Pastor
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and
Urban Development, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Latham and Ranking Member Pastor:

We are writing to request that \$186 million in funding for FY 2015 for the Maritime Security Program (MSP) be included in the FY 2015 appropriations bill for the Departments of Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies. This is the congressionally authorized amount necessary to ensure that the U.S. Maritime Administration, in conjunction with the Department of Defense, has the necessary funds available to fully implement the MSP. It is the same amount appropriated by Congress for the program in FY 2014.

The MSP was originally enacted to ensure that the United States has the U.S.-flag commercial sealift capability and trained U.S. citizen merchant mariners available to crew the government and privately owned vessels needed by the Department of Defense in time of war or other international emergency. Most importantly, the Maritime Security Program and the uninterrupted operation of its maritime security fleet of 60 U.S.-flag militarily useful commercial vessels ensures that America will in fact be able to support and supply our troops overseas. It guarantees that American-flag vessels and American crews will continue to be available to transport the supplies and equipment our troops need to do their job in behalf of our nation.

Failure to approve the requested funding for the Maritime Security Program not only will put American troops at risk but will weaken America's overall security interests and will cost the American taxpayer significantly more than the amount requested for FY 2015 for the MSP. Without having the MSP and its maritime security fleet to rely upon, the options available to the Department of Defense and to our country to meet America's commercial sealift capability requirements are totally unacceptable.

On the one hand, our country would be faced with the option of giving foreign-flag shipping interests and their foreign mariners -- interests who may not share America's goals, objectives and values -- the responsibility for supporting and advancing America's security interests overseas. These foreign-flag shipping services will have to be paid for by the United States, and it means our country will be encouraging the outsourcing of American maritime jobs as we spend taxpayer dollars on foreign-flag ships and their foreign crews.

On the other hand, our country would be faced with the option of having the Department of Defense build, maintain, and operate the requisite vessels itself, at a tremendous cost to the American taxpayer. In fact, a 2006 report prepared for the National Defense Transportation Association--

Military Sealift Committee concluded that “the likely cost to the government to replicate just the vessel capacity provided by the MSP dry cargo vessels would be \$13 billion.” In addition, the United States Transportation Command has estimated that it would cost the U.S. Government an additional \$52 billion to replicate the “global intermodal system” that is made available to the Department of Defense by MSP participants who are continuously developing, maintaining, and upgrading their systems. In contrast, the commercial maritime industry, through the MSP, will provide the Department of Defense with these same vessels and global intermodal system at a cost to the taxpayer of \$186 million in FY 2015, a fraction of what it would cost our government to do the job itself.

In other words, without funding the MSP and ensuring the continued operation of its maritime security fleet, America would either have to place the safety of our troops and the security of our nation in the hands of foreign shipping interests or be forced to spend billions of dollars more of the taxpayers’ dollars to achieve the commercial sealift capability that will be lost if the requested funds for MSP are not appropriated.

During congressional consideration of the reauthorization of the MSP in 2003, General John W. Handy, then-Commander in Chief, United States Transportation Command, told Congress that: “As we look at operations on multiple fronts in support of the War on Terrorism, it is clear that our limited defense resources will increasingly rely on partnerships with industry to maintain the needed capability and capacity to meet our most demanding wartime scenarios ... MSP is a cost-effective program that assures guaranteed access to required U.S.-flag commercial shipping and U.S. merchant mariners when needed ... MSP is a vital element of our military’s strategic sealift and global response capability.”

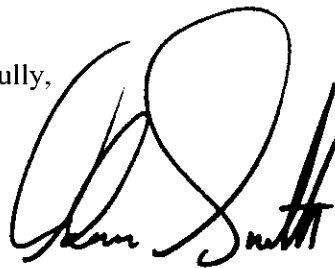
We again ask that you support this highly efficient and low-cost public-private partnership by including \$186 million in your Subcommittee’s FY 2015 appropriations legislation in order to fully implement the MSP. In so doing, you will be saving the American taxpayer billions of dollars because the Department of Defense will be able to utilize privately owned U.S.-flag vessels to meet its commercial sealift requirements rather than buying and maintaining this capability on its own.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

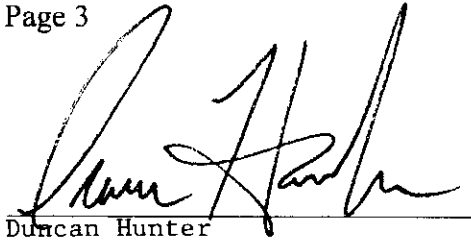
Respectfully,

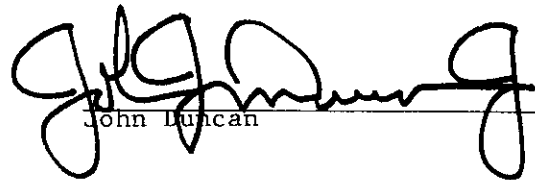


The Honorable Howard P. “Buck” McKeon
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services

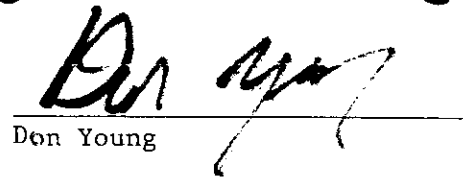


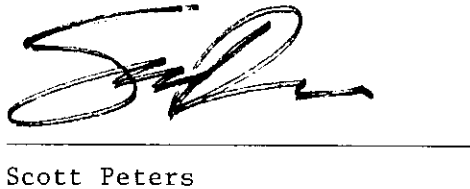
The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services

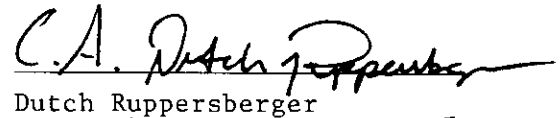

Duncan Hunter

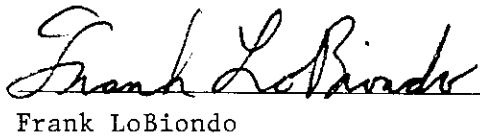

John Duncan

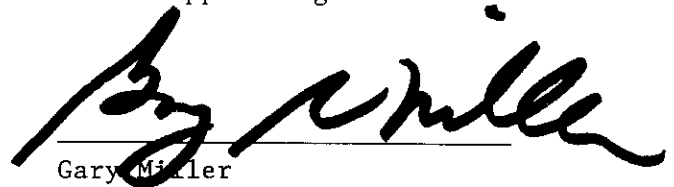

Corrine Brown


Don Young


Scott Peters

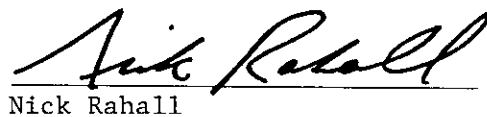

Dutch Ruppersberger

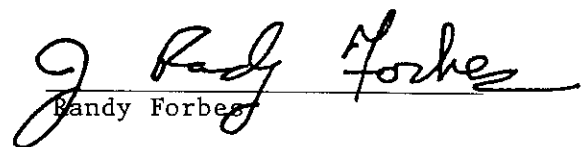

Frank LoBiondo

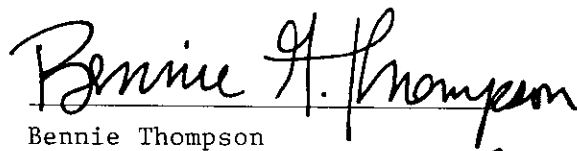

Gary Miller


Elijah Cummings

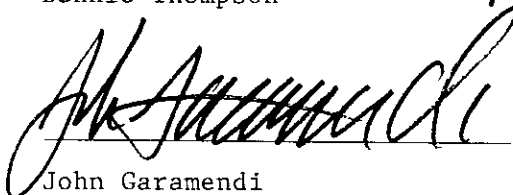

Rick Larsen


Nick Rahall

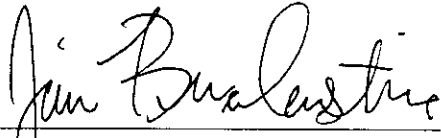

Bandy Forbes


Bennie Thompson

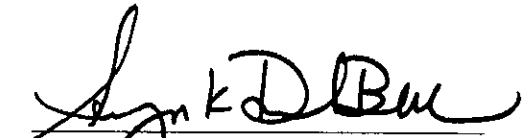

Robert Wittman


John Garamendi

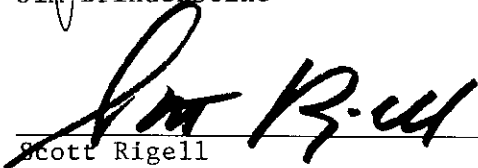

Derek Kilmer



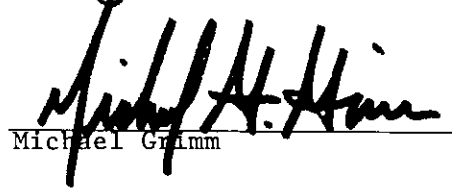
Jim Brindenstine



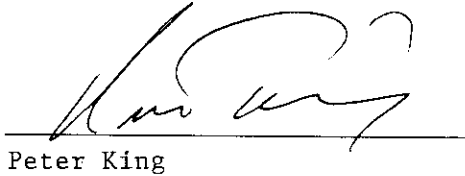
Suzan DeBene



Scott Rigell



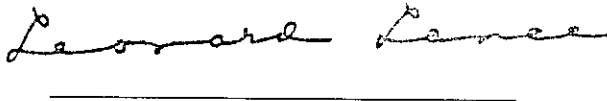
Michael Grimm



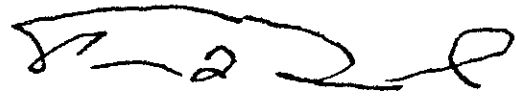
Peter King



Frederica Wilson



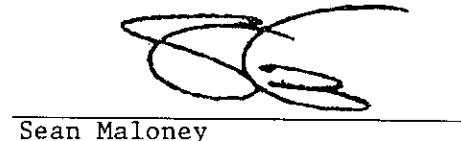
Leonard Lance



Cedric Richmond



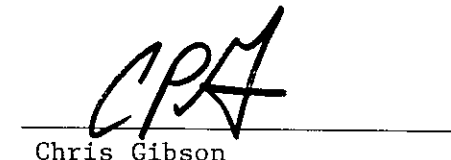
Suzanne Bonamici



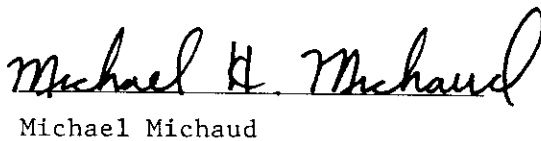
Sean Maloney



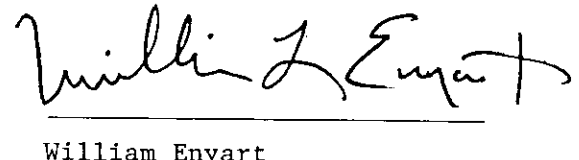
Carol Shea-Porter



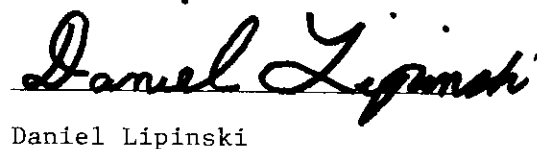
Chris Gibson



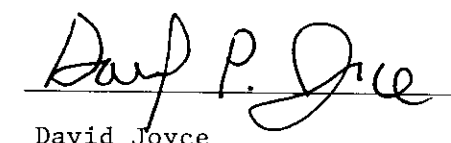
Michael Michaud



William Enyart



Daniel Lipinski



David Joyce



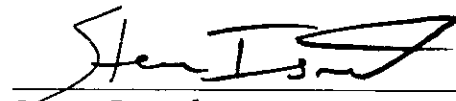
Brian Higgins



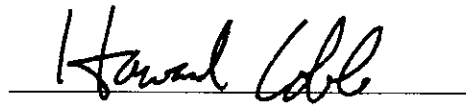
Joe Courtney




Linda Sanchez



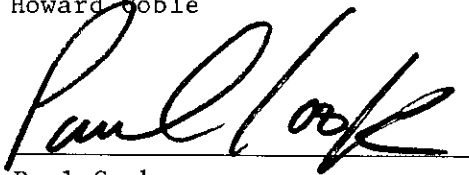
Steve Israel



Howard Soble



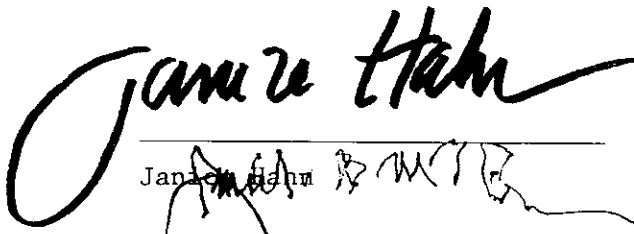
Michael Turner



Paul Cook



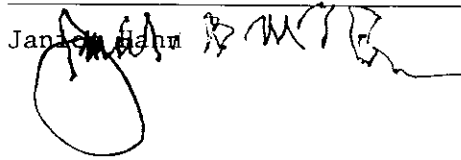
Alan Lowenthal



Janice Hahn



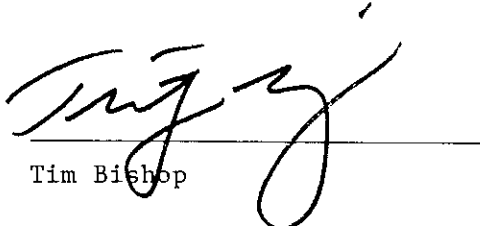
Tulsi Gabbard



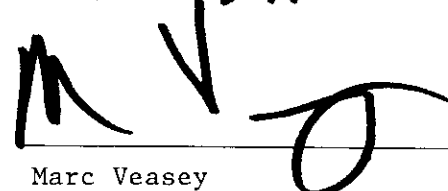
David McKinley



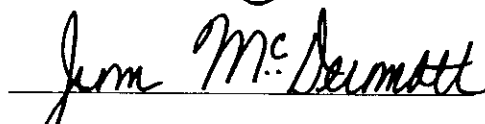
Denny Heck



Tim Bishop



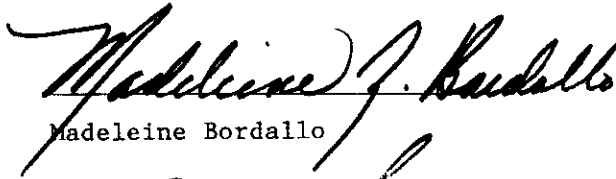
Marc Veasey



Jim McDermott



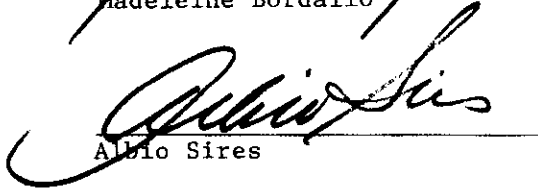
Lois Frankel



Madeleine Bordallo



Rick Nolan



Albio Sires



Tim Walz



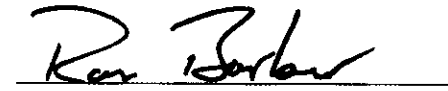
Peter DeFazio



Ed Perlmutter



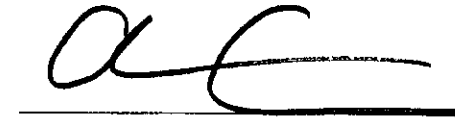
Karen Bass



Ron Barber



Pete Gallego



Andre Carson
