

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 20, 2015

The Honorable Susan Collins
U.S. Senate
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing, Urban Development, and
Related Agencies
SD-186
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
U.S. Senate
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing, Urban Development, and
Related Agencies
SD-186
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Collins and Ranking Member Reed:


We are writing to request that \$186 million be provided for the Maritime Security Program (MSP) in the FY 2016 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, is able to fully implement MSP.

MSP, which supports a maritime security fleet of 60 U.S.-flag vessels, is 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. The MSP also ensures that America can provide our troops overseas with the supplies and equipment necessary to do their jobs on behalf of our nation.

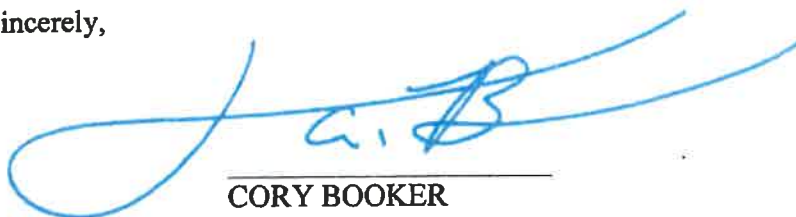
Without the funding, the United States would not have assured access to U.S.-flag commercial vessels at a minimal cost. Without this funding, our country would be faced with two undesirable options: (1) having to rely on foreign flag ships and mariners for supporting and advancing America's security interests overseas; or (2) requiring the Department of Defense to build, maintain and operate the requisite vessels itself. The first option would result in the outsourcing of American maritime jobs as we spend taxpayer dollars on foreign flag ships and crews, who may not share America's goals and interests. The second option would cost the government at least \$65 billion to replicate the capacity provided by MSP vessels and access to the "global intermodal system" that is made available to the Department of Defense by MSP participants.

We ask that you continue to support this highly efficient and low-cost public-private partnership by including \$186 million for the MSP in your Subcommittee's FY 2016 appropriations legislation. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



ROGER F. WICKER
United States Senator



CORY BOOKER
United States Senator



DAVID VITTER
United States Senator



MARK R. WARNER
United States Senator



MARIA CANTWELL
United States Senator



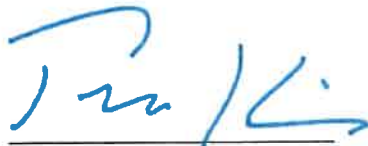
BRIAN SCHATZ
United States Senator



ROBERT MENENDEZ
United States Senator



SHELDON WHITEHOUSE
United States Senator



TIM KAINE
United States Senator



RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
United States Senator