

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart, Chairman
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban
Development, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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

March 29, 2017

Dear Chairman Diaz-Balart and Ranking Member Price:

We are writing to request \$300,000,000 for MSP when you develop your FY 2018 appropriations bill later this year. \$300,000,000 is the annual authorized level in law for FY 2018 for the program.

MSP 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. MSP also ensures that the U.S. can provide our troops overseas with the supplies and equipment necessary to do their jobs on behalf of our nation.

In fact, on January 17, 2016, General Darren McDew, Commander, United States Transportation Command, stated: "As a military professional and senior leader, I think about and plan for what the future may hold, and I would tell you we must prepare for the real possibility we will not enjoy the uncontested seas and broad international support experienced in 1991. If either of those possibilities becomes reality, and if we remain committed to responding to security incidents around the globe, *"the only way of guaranteeing we decisively meet our national objectives is with U.S. ships operated by U.S. mariners."* (emphasis added)

Equally important, MSP is a public-private partnership between the U.S. government and the U.S.-flag shipping industry whereby the Department of Defense (DOD) is provided assured access to privately-owned commercial shipping assets, related global intermodal systems, and the active pool of U.S. citizen mariners necessary to support America's defense objectives around the world. This cost-effective program utilizes existing U.S. maritime private sector capabilities at a fraction of the cost of what it would take if the Federal government were to replicate the vessel capacity and global intermodal systems made available to DOD by MSP contractors who continuously develop and maintain modern logistics systems for commercial and defense purposes. The cost to the Federal government of replicating just the vessel capacity is estimated

at \$13 billion. The United States Transportation Command has estimated an additional cost of \$52 billion to replicate the global intermodal system that is made available to the DOD by MSP participants. In contrast, the MSP, at the funding level authorized by Public Law 114-113, will provide DOD with U.S.-flag, U.S. crewed militarily-useful commercial vessels and worldwide logistics systems at a fraction of the estimated \$65 billion it would cost the Federal government to do this job itself.

Since 2009, privately-owned U.S.-flag commercial vessels and their civilian U.S. citizen crews have transported more than 90 percent of the sustainment cargo needed to support U.S. military operations and rebuilding programs in Iraq and Afghanistan. Significantly, U.S.-flag vessels enrolled in MSP carried 99 percent of these cargoes. Without a viable U.S.-flag commercial fleet and the American merchant mariners this fleet supports, the United States would be unable to deploy its military forces on a global basis and to deliver the supplies and equipment American troops need to do their job on behalf of the American people.

In November 2015, Rear Admiral Thomas Shannon, Commander, Military Sealift Command, stated that "without a strong U.S.-flagged merchant marine, we cannot answer the call and carry our nation to war." He went on to express strong support for the MSP as a key component necessary to help maintain our U.S.-flag merchant marine, stating that "[MSP] is a bargain." For these reasons, we urge you to provide the annual amount of \$300,000,000 for FY 2018.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Robert J. Wittman


Joe Courtney


Nanette Diaz Barragan


Anthony Brown


Madeleine Bordallo


Julia Brownley


Mike Bost


Paul Cook



Juan Vargas



Don Young



John Katko



Ralph Abraham, M.D.



David B. McKinley



Donald M. Payne, Jr.



Kathy Castor



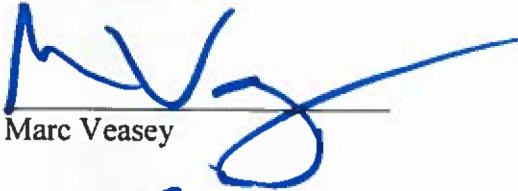
Scott Peters



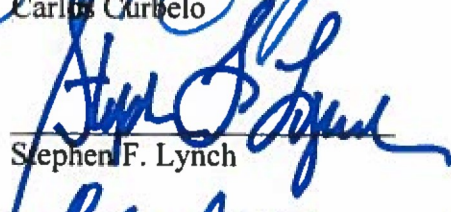
Cedric Richmond



Carlos Curbelo



Marc Veasey



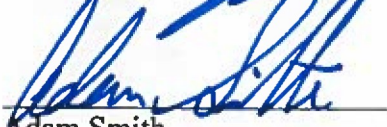
Stephen F. Lynch



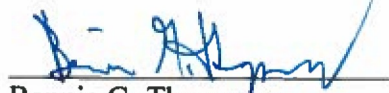
Lee Zeldin



Peter DeFazio



Adam Smith




Bennie G. Thompson



Linda Sanchez



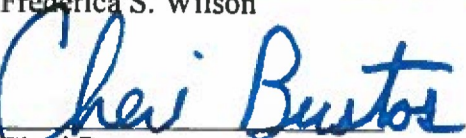
Doug LaMalfa



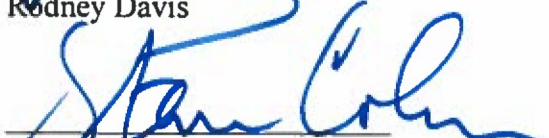
Frederica S. Wilson



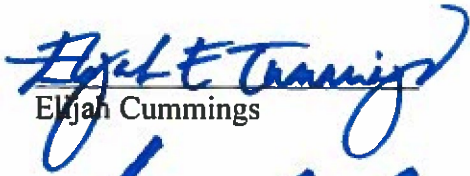
Rodney Davis



Cheri Bustos



Steve Cohen



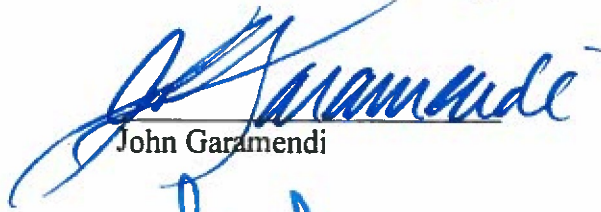
Eljah Cummings



Ruben Gallego



Susan Davis



John Garamendi



John Delaney



Garret Graves



Suzan DelBene



Bob Gibbs



Mark DeSaulnier



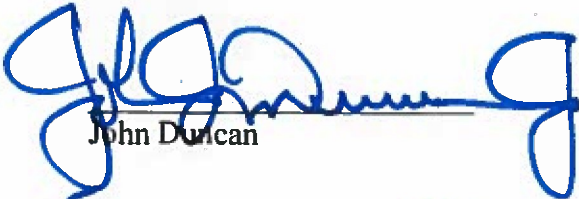
Colleen Hanabusa



Daniel Donovan



Denny Heck



John Duncan



Brian Higgins



Elizabeth Esty



Jared Huffman



Brian Fitzpatrick



Duncan Hunter


Pramila Jayapal

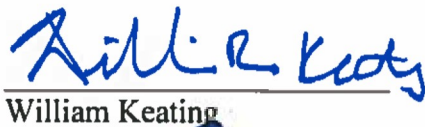

Frank LoBiondo


Mike Johnson

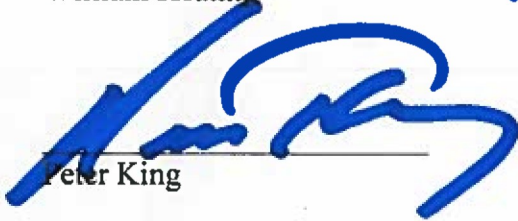

Grace Napolitano


Walter Jones


Rick Nolan

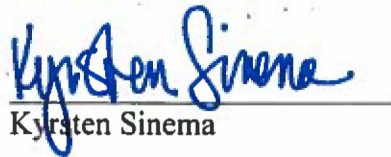

William Keating


Chellie Pingree


Peter King


Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan


James Langevin


Kyrsten Sinema


Rick Larsen


Albio Sires


Alan Lowenthal


Jackie Speier

A. Donald McEachin

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Thomas R. Suozzi

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Randy K. Weber

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Val B. Demings

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David Rouzer

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Lois Frankel

Lois Frankel

Sean Patrick Maloney

Sean Patrick Maloney

J. Luis Correa

J. Luis Correa

Brian Babin

Brian Babin

Stacey Plaskett

Stacey Plaskett

cc: The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen, Chairman, Committee on Appropriations
c-c: The Honorable Nita Lowey, Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations