

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 8, 2019

The Honorable Susan Collins  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing, and  
Urban Development, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
184 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing, and  
Urban Development, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
125 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Collins and Ranking Member Reed:

We are writing to request that funding at the authorized level for the Maritime Security Program (MSP) be included in the FY 2020 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill.

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.

MSP is a cost effective, public-private partnership between the U.S. government and the U.S.-flag shipping industry. The program uses existing U.S. maritime private sector capabilities at a fraction of the cost of what it would take the federal government. MSP contractors, who continuously develop and maintain modern logistics systems, are able to provide enhanced vessel capacity and global intermodal transportation systems to DoD. The cost to the federal government of replicating the vessels and intermodal system is estimated to be at least \$65 billion.

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 2018, Secretary of Defense James Mattis affirmed these points when he said, "As small as our Merchant Marine may be today, it is absolutely essential. It's in every war plan that I review, I guarantee you. Because you're going to be the fourth arm of the defense. You're going to sustain our allies and fuel our ships and ferry our warriors."

We ask that you continue to support this highly efficient and low-cost public-private partnership at the authorized level as you consider funding levels for FY 2020 in your subcommittee's appropriations bill. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Roger F. Wicker  
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator



Dan Sullivan  
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator



Bill Cassidy, M.D.  
United States Senator



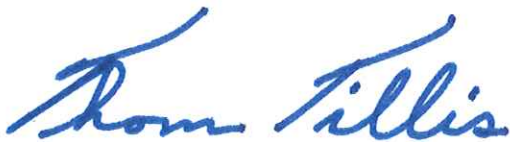
Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator



Martha McSally  
United States Senator



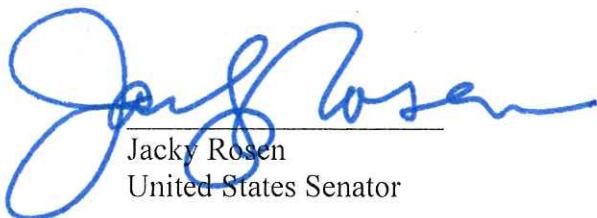
Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



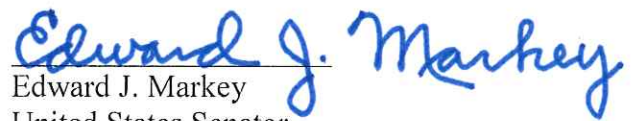
Thom Tillis  
United States Senator



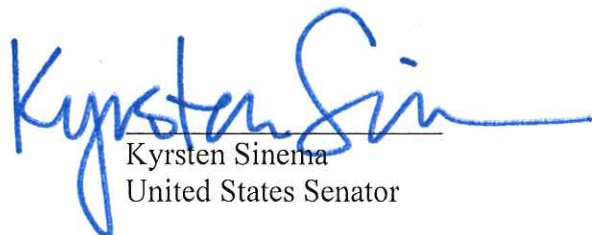
Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



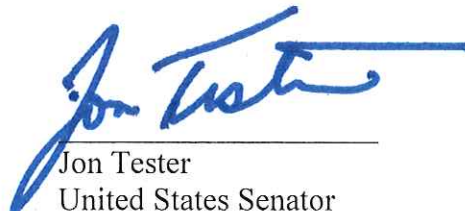
Jacky Rosen  
United States Senator



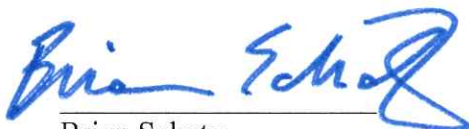
Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator



Kyrsten Sinema  
United States Senator



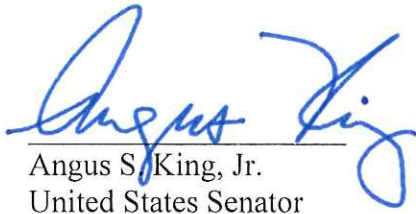
Jon Tester  
United States Senator

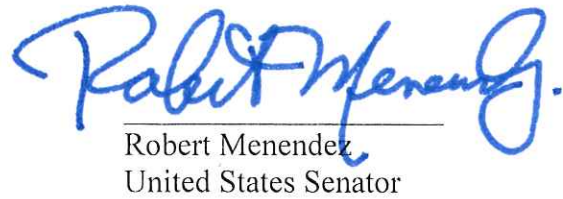


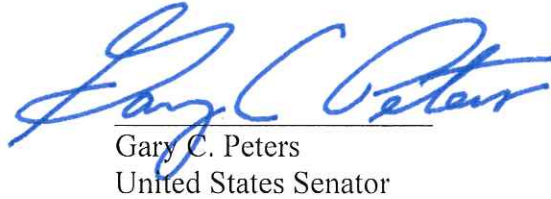
Brian Schatz  
United States Senator



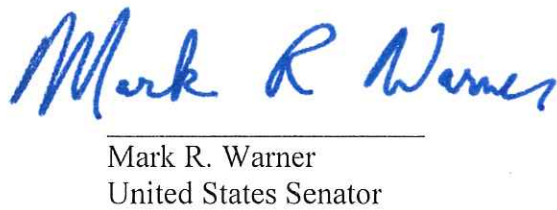
Kamala D. Harris  
United States Senator

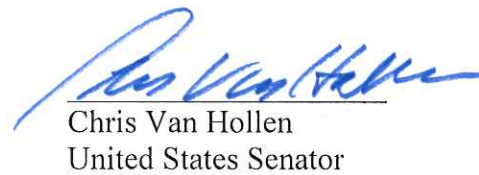
  
Angus S. King, Jr.  
United States Senator

  
Robert Menendez  
United States Senator

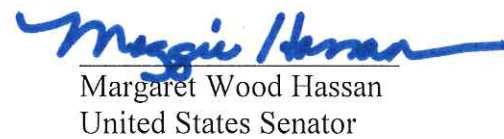
  
Gary C. Peters  
United States Senator

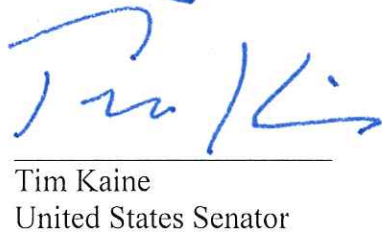
  
Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator

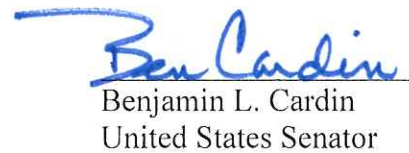
  
Mark R. Warner  
United States Senator

  
Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator

  
Joe Manchin III  
United States Senator

  
Margaret Wood Hassan  
United States Senator

  
Tim Kaine  
United States Senator

  
Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator

  
John Kennedy  
United States Senator

cc: The Honorable Richard Shelby, Chairman, Committee on Appropriations  
The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations