



**James L. Henry**  
**Chairman**

## **USA MARITIME APPLAUDS AID FOR MARITIME SECURITY PROGRAM IN HEROES LEGISLATION**

The USA Maritime Coalition thanks the leadership in the House of Representatives for including emergency funding for the Maritime Security Program in the COVID-19 relief legislation released on September 28th. This action, according to the Coalition, clearly acknowledges the irreplaceable contributions provided by the privately-owned U.S.-flag vessels participating in the Maritime Security Program, and their U.S. citizen crews, to our nation's economic and military security.

The worldwide coronavirus pandemic is affecting the operation of the U.S.-flag maritime security fleet and the jobs of American merchant mariners. It is putting at risk the ongoing ability of this fleet to provide the commercial sealift readiness capability relied upon by the Department of Defense to support American troops deployed overseas. Without the capability provided by U.S.-flag vessels and their American crews, the Department of Defense would be forced to entrust the security of our Nation and the safety of American troops to the whims of foreign shipping interests and their foreign crews who may not share America's foreign policy and defense objectives.

The COVID-19 relief legislation put forward in the House of Representatives authorizes the United States Maritime Administration to make an additional payment to each of the 60 U.S.-flag vessels participating in the Maritime Security Program, using funds from previously appropriated unobligated balances in the Maritime Security Program account. This provision, first included in FY'21 appropriations legislation passed by the House of Representatives on July 31, represents a critically important first step in the effort to ensure that these U.S.-flag vessels and their American crews remain available to meet the needs of the Department of Defense. It will help mitigate the impact of the coronavirus on the U.S.-flag fleet, the American merchant mariners who have been recognized as part of America's essential workforce, and the commercial sealift readiness capability provided to the United States under the Maritime Security Program.

The USA Maritime Coalition urges the House of Representatives and Senate to come together quickly to enact much-needed COVID-19 relief legislation that includes critically important funding for the Maritime Security Program.

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