



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

March 16, 2020

The Honorable Nita Lowey, Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger, Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David E. Price, Chairman
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing, and Urban
Development, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United State House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United State House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Lowey and Chairman Price:

We are writing to request that \$314,007,780 for the Maritime Security Program (MSP), as authorized by PL 116-92, the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act, be included when you develop your fiscal year 2021 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies (THUD) Appropriations Bill. Additionally, MSP is a defense spending element governed by the Budget Control Act of 2011 (P.L. 112-25) and the only defense element appropriated in the THUD Appropriations Bill. We also request that a \$314,007,780 defense

302(b) allocation be provided to the THUD Appropriations Subcommittee to ensure sufficient funding for MSP.

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 testimony last March before the House Armed Services Committee's Readiness and Seapower and Projection Forces Subcommittees, General Stephen Lyons, Commander, United States Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM), stated, "sealift is USTRANSCOM's number one readiness concern." He elaborated further on the value of MSP to DOD's sealift needs – "The Maritime Security Program (MSP), authorized by Congress and administered by the Maritime Administration (MARAD), provides a stipend for 60 U.S.-flag ships that are contractually committed to be available for national contingencies. These MSP participants contribute to VISA which enables USTRANSCOM assured access to shipping services using U.S.-flag ships and their global transportation networks during contingencies through preapproved contingency contracts."

At the same hearing, Rear Admiral Mark Buzby, Administrator of the Maritime Administration (MARAD), highlighted the importance of the U.S. merchant marine as part of MSP and in supporting defense sealift – "Commercial mariners play an essential role, during steady state and contingency operations, by delivering supplies and equipment to deployed forces and overseas installations around the world... The MSP facilitates employment for 2,400 U.S. merchant mariners qualified to sail on oceangoing vessels who we can call upon to crew the RRF vessels when activated."

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 116-92, 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.

For these reasons, we urge you to appropriate \$314,007,780 for the Maritime Security Program in fiscal year 2021.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,


JOE COURTNEY
Member of Congress


ROB WITTMAN
Member of Congress

Member of Congress

The Fiscal Year 2021 Support Letter for the Maritime Security Program (MSP) is sent on behalf of the following Members of the United States House of Representatives:

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