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## **House Bills Reform Maritime Regulations, Promote Industry Jobs**

ARLINGTON, VA – The introduction and progression of several important pieces of maritime legislation in the House of Representatives this week is proof that Congress is acting on its promise to improve economic and regulatory circumstances for American companies and workers. Republican and Democratic friends of the U.S. maritime industry from states along the inland rivers, Great Lakes and Atlantic, Pacific and Gulf coasts have shown leadership in introducing and moving three bipartisan bills that will: 1) protect the environment while promoting commerce; 2) streamline worker applications for security identification credentials; and, 3) ensure transparency in the implementation of U.S. navigation laws by federal agencies.

All three of these bills are the result of creative thinking and sound policy work by Republicans and Democrats alike. The tugboat, towboat and barge industry, which accounts for the largest number of American jobs and vessels in the U.S. fleet, will continue working with Congress to pass these common-sense reforms. The following is the list of bills moving in the House:

- On October 13, the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee approved by voice vote H.R. 2840, the Commercial Vessel Discharges Reform Act. The bill, which has been endorsed by a broad coalition of vessel owners, labor unions, shipper groups and ports, provides a uniform national standard for the regulation of ballast water and other vessel discharges and provides vessel owners with the certainty that will allow them to make investments in technology to protect the marine environment while maintaining the efficient flow of maritime commerce. H.R. 2840 was introduced September 2 by Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Subcommittee Chairman Frank LoBiondo (R-NJ), Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee Chairman Bob Gibbs (R-OH), and Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman John Mica (R-FL). It now has a total of six cosponsors, including Rep. Jim Cooper (D-TN), Rep. Jamie Herrera Beutler (R-WA), Rep. Jeff Landry (R-LA) and Rep. Steven LaTourette (R-OH).
- On October 12, Rep. Steve Scalise (R-LA) introduced H.R. 3173, a bill that will reduce burdens on 1.8 million mariners and other transportation professionals by modernizing the process to apply for a Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC). The bill maintains a high level of port, vessel and facility security while eliminating the need for workers to make two trips to a TWIC enrollment center to apply for, and then to pick up and activate, their card. Rep. Scalise was joined by several original co-sponsors including Homeland Security Committee Chairman Peter King (R-NY), Homeland Security Committee Ranking Member Bennie Thompson (D-MS), Rep. Don Young (R-AK), Rep. Elijah Cummings (D-MD), and Rep. Cedric Richmond (D-LA). Rep. Richmond also introduced language similar to H.R. 3173 as an amendment to H.R. 3116, the Department of Homeland Security Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012, which was approved unanimously by the Homeland Security Committee.
- On October 14, Rep. Elijah Cummings (D-MD) and Rep. Jeff Landry (R-LA) introduced H.R. 3202, the American Mariners Job Protection Act, a bill to ensure that America's foundational maritime law, the Jones Act, which requires that domestic waterborne cargo move on American-owned, -crewed and -built vessels, be adhered to by executive branch agencies. This legislation is necessary to tighten up the national security requirements for Jones Act waivers and improve transparency in the waiver process.

AWO President & CEO Tom Allegretti said, "AWO thanks the Members of Congress who've shown the leadership to introduce and move these important pieces of legislation that are good for American businesses and workers."