



## AWO POLICY PRIORITIES 2017-2018

The American Waterways Operators is proud to advocate for public policy that supports the U.S. tugboat, towboat and barge industry in moving economically critical cargo safely and efficiently, providing family-wage jobs for American citizens, and contributing to U.S. homeland and national security. AWO's top policy priorities for 2017-2018 include:

**Support the Jones Act.** The Jones Act, the law of the land since 1920, requires that vessels moving cargo between U.S. ports be owned by American companies, crewed by American mariners and built in American shipyards. The statute is vital to maintaining a strong U.S. maritime transportation industry, a critical factor in U.S. economic, homeland and national security.

**Pass the Vessel Incidental Discharge Act.** Today, commercial vessels moving vital maritime commerce on U.S. waterways are subject to conflicting and duplicative vessel discharge regulations issued by two federal agencies and 25 states. VIDA is bipartisan legislation that will streamline this broken regulatory system by consolidating regulations for ballast water and other discharges from commercial vessel operations under the authority of the U.S. Coast Guard.

**Maintain Federal Primacy Over Maritime Commerce.** The U.S. Constitution reserves regulation of interstate commerce to the federal government to prevent an unworkable patchwork of state laws and regulations. Federal preemption of state laws is especially vital to barges and towing vessels, which can transit the waters

of multiple states in a single voyage. AWO is committed to maintaining the efficiency and reliability of maritime commerce by ensuring a uniform and practical federal regulatory regime.

**Fund Waterways Infrastructure.** The urgent need for transportation infrastructure revitalization is an opportunity for Congress and the Administration to work together to secure essential improvements for our nation's inland and coastal waterways. Reliable inland and coastal water transportation infrastructure is the lifeblood of our nation's domestic commerce and international trade and should be a major part of any infrastructure package.

**Maintain Reliability of Navigation and Prevent Invasive Species Movement.** AWO is committed to reversing the movement of aquatic invasive species through solutions that are both environmentally effective and minimally disruptive to maritime commerce, a key driver of the U.S. economy and major contributor to homeland security. AWO supports scientific research and non-structural solutions to stop aquatic invasive species and opposes efforts to close locks or make structural changes that render them less efficient.

The tugboat, towboat and barge industry advocate since 1944.