

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 18, 2017Contact: Ben Lerner, 703-841-9300, ext. 253
blerner@americanwaterways.com**AWO Welcomes Inclusion of Vessel Discharge Reform, Waterway Tender Recapitalization in Coast Guard Authorization Bill**

ARLINGTON, VA – The American Waterways Operators welcomes the inclusion of the Commercial Vessel Incidental Discharge Act (CVIDA) and the recapitalization of the aging fleet of inland waterway tenders as part of the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2017, which was approved today by the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation by voice vote.

CVIDA is bipartisan legislation that streamlines what is currently a broken regulatory system in which commercial vessels moving vital maritime commerce on U.S. waterways are subject to conflicting and duplicative vessel discharge regulations by two federal agencies and 25 states. Under CVIDA, regulations for ballast water and other discharges from commercial vessel operations are consolidated under the authority of the Coast Guard, in consultation with EPA.

AWO President & CEO **Tom Allegretti** commented: “The inclusion of CVIDA in today’s mark-up of the Coast Guard Authorization Act is a critical milestone in the bipartisan effort to enact sensible vessel discharge regulatory reform that ensures the smooth functioning of interstate maritime commerce while maintaining high environmental standards, both of which are of great importance to the U.S. tugboat, towboat and barge industry. AWO thanks Senate Commerce Committee Chairman John Thune (R-SD) and Ranking Member Bill Nelson (D-FL), as well as Senators Sullivan (R-AK), Wicker (R-MS), Casey (D-PA), Rubio (R-FL), and Schatz (D-HI) for their steadfast leadership on this issue. To reinforce Chairman Thune’s comment today, we remain ‘open for business’ and committed to working with him and Sen. Nelson to broaden the base of bipartisan support for this legislation.”

The authorization bill also includes a provision requiring the Coast Guard to submit a plan to Congress to replace the aging tender fleet. Mr. Allegretti commented: “A modernized, robust fleet of Coast Guard inland waterway and river tenders is vital to the safety and efficiency of maritime commerce, a fundamental pillar of our national economy. AWO commends Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-OK) for his recognition of the fleet’s importance, and thanks him for his successful effort to include its revitalization in this year’s Coast Guard Authorization Act.”

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About the American Waterways Operators

The American Waterways Operators is the national trade association representing the tugboat, towboat and barge industry, which operates on the rivers, the Great Lakes, and along the coasts and in the harbors of the

United States. Barge transportation serves the nation as the safest, most environmentally friendly and most economical mode of freight transportation. For more information about AWO, please visit www.americanwaterways.com.