



Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives

Bill Shuster
Chairman

Washington, DC 20515

Peter A. DeFazio
Ranking Member

July 21, 2015

Christopher P. Bertram, Staff Director

Katherine W. Dedrick, Democratic Staff Director

The Honorable Fred Upton, Chairman
The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr., Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Upton and Ranking Member Pallone:

The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure has legislative jurisdiction over the non-national security aspects of United States merchant marine, including domestic cabotage laws. Those laws, found in chapter 551 of title 46, United States Code, are popularly known as the Jones Act. In conjunction with cargo preference and the Maritime Security Program, United States domestic cabotage laws allow the United States to retain a base level of expertise in shipbuilding and ship operations and maintenance. This base level of expertise provides stability to our commercial U.S. waterborne transportation industry and the access to vessels and vessel operators so vital to our national defense sealift needs. Billions of dollars of U.S. investment have been made in the Jones Act fleet and in training the mariners who operate those vessels.

We understand that on July 22, 2015, the Committee on Energy and Commerce will consider comprehensive energy legislation. We also understand certain interests have suggested modifying U.S. cabotage laws as part of such legislation. Cabotage laws are essential to maintaining a U.S. based merchant marine. Modification of cabotage laws would result in the referral of the bill to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. Such changes would also be of significant concern to the many Members who, like us, serve on the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the Committee on Armed Services, and support both a reliable U.S. maritime transportation system and a sufficient pool of U.S. mariners and ships to meet national defense sealift needs.

We look forward to supporting a comprehensive energy package, which promotes U.S. production, the efficient use of energy, and U.S. energy independence. We hope that package will not include amendments detrimental to the U.S. maritime transportation system or our national defense sealift needs.



Bill Shuster
Chairman
Committee on Transportation
and Infrastructure

Sincerely,



Duncan Hunter
Chairman
Subcommittee on Coast Guard
and Maritime Transportation