

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 3, 2015

The Honorable Anthony Foxx
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

The Honorable Shaun Donovan
Director, Office of Management and Budget
Executive Office of the President
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Secretary Foxx and Director Donovan:

As you begin to develop the President's Budget for Fiscal Year 2017, we would like to express our strong support for fully funding the design and replacement of the nation's multi-mission training vessels.

As you know, the maritime industry is an essential part of our nation's economy, in addition to playing a critical role in national security. Each year, the industry creates over \$100 billion in output, employing 1.5 million Americans and paying tens of billions in wages and benefits. The United States has long maintained a strong maritime industry through concerted investments in the sector, including investments in the ships used by the nation's six State Maritime Academies (SMAs).

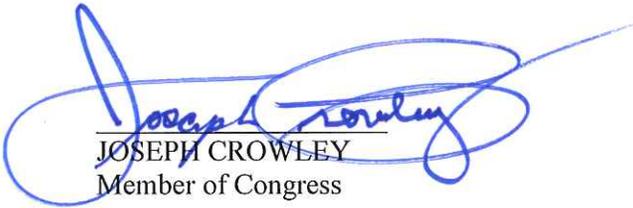
Now, however, the academies find themselves without a clear program to replace their seriously aging multi-mission training vessels. Without these vessels, the SMAs will not have sufficient means to train future generations of maritime workers, not to mention the 70 percent of the nation's new United States Coast Guard licensed officers that are trained at the SMAs each year. This would harm thousands of students from all 50 states who receive training at the academies, and it couldn't come at a worse time – the Department of Labor estimates that the industry will grow by 15 percent over the next four years, including jobs in shipping, natural resources and more. But, if we don't fully prepare our own students there is a real risk those jobs could go elsewhere.

These training vessels are an essential part of the SMA curriculum, as sea time is required for graduation and licensure. But, our nation's students aren't the only ones who would benefit from replacing these aging vessels. The American shipbuilding industry could benefit greatly from the development of the SMA ships. These investments create a broader ripple throughout the economy – the U.S. Maritime Administration estimates that every job in the shipbuilding industry indirectly supports 2.7 jobs in related industries. And most importantly, these jobs would be created right here at home, directly benefiting American workers who are still recovering from the recent economic recession. The ships are also called upon to assist in times of national emergency and for humanitarian relief efforts, so it is crucial that we ensure our academies have modern and up-to-date equipment.

We appreciated your response to our concerns by including in the President's FY2016 Budget a request for funding the common design of new National Security Multi-Mission Vessels. With our support, both the House Armed Services Committee and the Committee on Appropriations included these important resources in their legislation funding the U.S. Maritime Administration. We urge you to again include important funding to carry out the next steps in development of new vessels in the President's Budget for the coming fiscal year.

We are all proud of our nation's maritime industry and its merchant mariners, who play vital economic and national security roles. The SMAs are an essential part of the effort to support not just our nation's maritime workforce, but also our military's sealift capacity and an industrial base that our nation has fought to preserve. We urge you to sustain the mission of our State Maritime Academies by supporting the funding levels proposed in the President's budget for these critical institutions. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



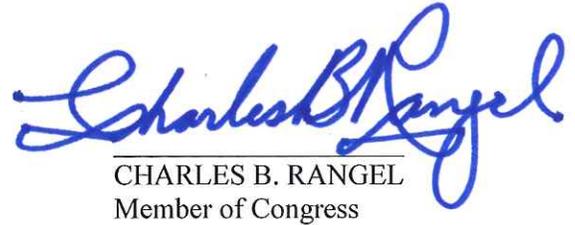
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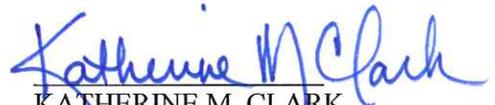
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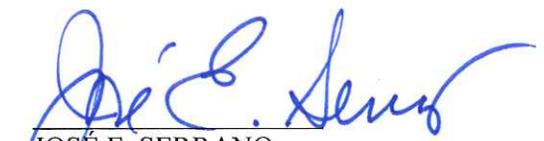
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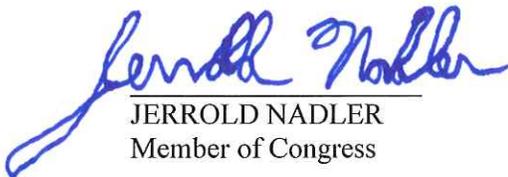
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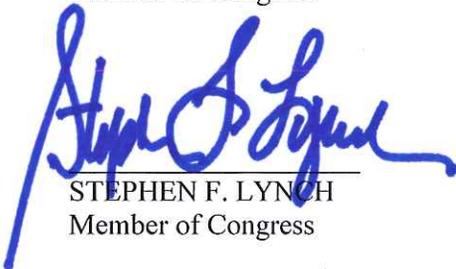
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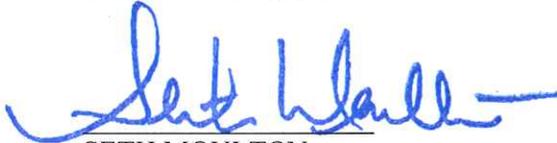
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