

February 17, 2015

The Hon. John Thune  
Chairman  
Committee on Commerce, Science and  
Transportation  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Hon. Bill Nelson  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Commerce, Science and  
Transportation  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Thune and Ranking Member Nelson:

The undersigned organizations include U.S. and international vessel owners and operators; fishing vessel, passenger vessel and charterboat operators; labor unions; industries that rely on marine vessels to transport essential cargoes in domestic and international commerce; marine terminals; and port authorities. We are writing to express support for S. 373, the Vessel Incidental Discharge Act, and urge that this important legislation be marked up and reported out as soon as possible by the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation.

S. 373 is bipartisan legislation that will establish nationally uniform and environmentally sound standards for ballast water and other vessel discharges. Last year, identical legislation was co-sponsored by 32 Senators from all regions of the country, from Hawaii to Massachusetts. We are grateful to Sen. Rubio for reintroducing this legislation in the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress and to you for cosponsoring it, and ask for your leadership in bringing the bill before your committee for timely consideration.

S. 373 is urgently needed. Today, two federal agencies, the U.S. Coast Guard and the Environmental Protection Agency, regulate ballast water and other vessel discharges under two differing statutory authorities. And, because neither federal statute preempts state action, 25 states have established their own requirements for many of those same discharges – over 150 in all. This overlapping patchwork of federal and state regulations makes compliance complicated, confusing and costly for vessel owners and mariners. It is counterproductive to the goal of enhanced environmental protection, as companies have delayed investment in costly treatment technologies because they lack certainty that such systems will be acceptable wherever a vessel calls. It creates inefficiencies and uncertainty that add costs for shippers that rely on marine transportation to move essential cargoes. And, it has forced federal and state agencies to duplicate efforts and expend significant time and taxpayer money in an unsuccessful attempt to harmonize their requirements.

S. 373 would rectify this untenable situation by establishing a uniform, science-based federal framework for the regulation of ballast water and other vessel discharges that will benefit all segments of the U.S. maritime industry. The bill is good for the maritime transportation industry and the industries that rely upon it, good for the health of the nation's waterways, and good for the American taxpayer. We thank you for your support for this legislation and we respectfully request that you bring S. 373 before the Committee for markup as soon as possible.

Thank you for your consideration of our views.

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Sincerely,

American Association of Port Authorities  
American Chemistry Council  
American Great Lakes Ports Association  
American Institute of Marine Underwriters  
American Iron and Steel Institute  
American Maritime Congress  
American Maritime Officers  
American Maritime Officers Service  
American Tunaboat Association  
American Waterways Operators  
Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway Association  
At-sea Processors Association  
Chamber of Shipping of America  
Conservation Cooperative of Gulf Fishermen  
Cruise Lines International Association  
Dredging Contractors of America  
Gulf Intracoastal Canal Association  
Infrastructure Council of the Illinois  
Chamber of Commerce  
International Association of Drilling  
Contractors  
International Longshoremen's Association,  
AFL-CIO  
International Organization of Masters,  
Mates & Pilots  
International Propeller Club of the U.S.  
INTERTANKO  
Jacksonville Marine Transportation Exchange  
Lake Carriers' Association  
Louisiana Association of Waterways  
Operators and Shipyards  
Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association  
Mariners' Advisory Committee for the Bay  
and River Delaware  
Maritime Association of the Port of NY/NJ  
Maritime Institute for Research and Industrial  
Development  
National Association of Charterboat Operators  
National Association of Manufacturers  
National Association of Waterfront Employers

National Grain and Feed Association  
National Mining Association  
New York Shipping Association  
North Pacific Fishing Vessel Owners  
Association  
Northwest Marine Trades Association  
Offshore Marine Service Association  
Pacific Seafood Processors Association  
Panama City Boatmen Association  
Passenger Vessel Association  
Seafarers International Union  
Shipbuilders Council of America  
Steel Manufacturers Association  
Texas Waterway Operators Association  
The National Industrial Transportation League  
Transportation Institute  
Tug and Barge Committee Port of NY/NJ  
United Catcher Boats Association  
Upper Mississippi Waterway Association  
U.S. Chamber of Commerce  
Water Quality Insurance Syndicate  
Western States Petroleum Association  
World Shipping Council