

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

May 9, 2007

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chairman
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing
and Urban Development, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Christopher S. Bond
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing
and Urban Development, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Murray and Ranking Member Bond:

We are writing to request that funding for the Maritime Security Program (MSP) be included in the Fiscal Year 2008 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill at the baseline level of \$156 million. Fiscal Year 2008 is the third year of funding for the reauthorized program at its expanded sixty ship level. This fleet is comprised of United States flag vessels crewed by United States citizens in service of our nation's defense.

Congress authorized an expanded MSP fleet based on the recommendation by the Department of Defense (DoD) that the sixty ship level was the most prudent, economical, and necessary solution to address the current and projected security requirements of the United States. The MSP fleet of United States flag vessels enables the DoD to meet its growing demand for modern commercial sealift, for state-of-the-art intermodal logistics management and capability, and for the trained, loyal U.S. citizen seafaring personnel to crew the vessels necessary to support and supply our armed forces in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere in the world.

MSP assures DoD access to ships and crews during mobilizations, and helps ensure the efficient flow of military cargo through commercial ports. The Department has testified that it would need more than \$10 billion in capital costs and \$1 billion in annual operations costs to replicate what MSP provides at a fraction of the cost.

We again urge that MSP be funded at the baseline amount of \$156 million. Thank you for your attention to our request.

Sincerely,


Robert A. McInerney


Aileen Feeth


C. S. Bond


Patty Murray

Josh Reed

Chuck Schumer

Barack

Sam Henshaw

Ron Wyden

Mark Pryor

Whitman

Jeff Smith

Maria Cantwell

Tom F. Kelly

Kent Lott

Lee Meriwether

Ben Cardin

Tom Lantos

Dan Vitter