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ARMED SERVICES  
COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION  
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS  
RULES AND ADMINISTRATION  
COMMISSION ON SECURITY  
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**United States Senate**  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

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April 6, 2017

The Honorable Susan Collins  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and  
Urban Development, and Related Agencies  
Subcommittee  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and  
Urban Development, and Related Agencies  
Subcommittee  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Collins and Ranking Member Reed:

We are writing to request that funding at the authorized level for the Maritime Security Program (MSP) be included in the Fiscal Year 2018 Departments of Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill.

MSP is a vital component of our military strategic sealift and global response capability. It is designed to ensure that the United States has the U.S.-flag commercial sealift capability and trained U.S. citizen merchant mariners available in times of war or national emergencies. MSP also ensures that the United States can provide our troops overseas with the supplies and equipment necessary to do their jobs on behalf of our nation.


MSP is a cost-effective, public-private partnership between the U.S. government and the U.S.-flag shipping industry. The program utilizes existing U.S. maritime private sector capabilities at a fraction of the cost of what it would take the federal government. MSP contractors, who continuously develop and maintain modern logistics systems, are able provide enhanced vessel capacity and global intermodal transportation systems to the Department of Defense. The cost to the federal government of replicating the vessels and intermodal system is estimated at least \$65 billion.

Without a viable U.S.-flag commercial fleet and the American merchant mariners this fleet supports, the United States would be unable to deploy its military forces on a global basis and to deliver the supplies and equipment American troops need to do their job on behalf of the American people. In November 2015, Rear Admiral Thomas Shannon, Commander of the Military Sealift Command, stated that “without a strong U.S.-flagged merchant marine, we cannot answer the call and carry our nation to war.”

We ask that you continue to support this highly efficient and low-cost public-private partnership as you consider funding levels for FY2018 in your subcommittee’s appropriations bill.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
ROGER F. WICKER  
United States Senator


  
\_\_\_\_\_  
BRIAN SCHATZ  
United States Senator

  
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DANIEL SULLIVAN  
United States Senator

  
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MARIA CANTWELL  
United States Senator

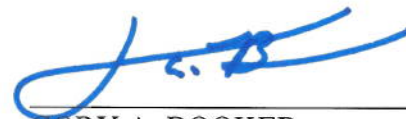
  
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JOHN KENNEDY  
United States Senator

  
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RICHARD BLUMENTHAL  
United States Senator

  
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BILL CASSIDY, M.D.  
United States Senator

  
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ROBERT MENENDEZ  
United States Senator

  
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MAZIE K. HIRONO  
United States Senator

  
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CORY A. BOOKER  
United States Senator

  
TAMMY BALDWIN  
United States Senator

  
TAMMY DUCKWORTH  
United States Senator

  
RON WYDEN  
United States Senator

  
EDWARD J. MARKEY  
United States Senator