



August 22, 2025

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As you prepare to meet with South Korean President Lee Jae Myung, I write to underscore the importance of securing a firm commitment that investments made under the \$150 billion shipbuilding cooperation package will result in meaningful expansions of shipbuilding, maintenance and repair, and critical supply chains here in the United States.

Now more than ever, we must ensure that investments in shipbuilding expand our capabilities to produce vessels that are made on U.S. soil, by American workers, relying on domestic supply chains. The details of how this package will be structured and managed are critical to determining its success, which should be measured by the construction of new domestic facilities, the expansion and modernization of existing yards in the United States, the building and launching of new U.S. built ships, and cooperation that affords access to technology that empowers America's workers and supports the Made in America economy. An agreement that results in any of these activities being outsourced to South Korea – even in the short-term – would be a strategic mistake that complicates our ongoing investment to strengthen U.S. economic and national security interests.

Any compromises regarding the goal of revitalizing the domestic shipbuilding sector provides China with additional time to cement further its foothold as a global shipbuilding superpower and undermines our ability to produce the ships that are essential to our defense and commerce. Outsourcing our ability to build and maintain warships does not strengthen the domestic and international ability to divest from China. Furthermore, there are clear risks in outsourcing these functions to foreign shipyards located near an adversary, such as potentially undermining deterrence in peacetime.

The United States accounts for 0.1% of global shipbuilding, while South Korea accounts for 29.1%. In order to revitalize our domestic shipbuilding industry, we must prioritize American shipbuilding capacity. Strengthening our shipbuilding industrial base is not only a matter of economic renewal, but also a matter of national security and strategic independence. We must be able to build, maintain, and repair the vessels that keep our commerce moving and our nation safe, without reliance on foreign governments or overseas facilities. This is why I have been a strong supporter of efforts to counter China's dominance over the global shipbuilding sector,

including the Section 301 effort led by labor unions that your administration is set to put into effect on October 11, 2025. It is also necessary to enact the SHIPS for America Act (S. 1541) which seeks to strengthen our shipyards and workers using collected Section 301 fees on vessels that visit U.S. ports.

Revitalizing the domestic shipbuilding sector has generated bipartisan consensus as an issue of critical importance. As we move forward, I hope you will focus on driving growth and innovation in our shipyards and stand firm against any deals introducing long-term economic and strategic vulnerability that would set our nation further back from our goal. As you continue discussions regarding the details of South Korea's investments in the U.S. shipbuilding sector, I urge that you prioritize creating jobs here at home and ensure that our shipbuilders, including Korean investment in U.S. based subsidiaries such as Hanwha's yard in Philadelphia, have the tools they need to compete and succeed. The shipbuilding, maintenance and repair supply chain should not be outsourced to other nations.

I appreciate your attention to this important matter and stand ready to continue supporting commonsense efforts to expand U.S. shipbuilding capabilities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tammy Baldwin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tammy" and last name "Baldwin" clearly distinguishable.

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

cc: Hon. Howard Lutnick, Secretary of Commerce
Amb. Jamieson Greer, United States Trade Representative