

May 7, 2015

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
717 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Baldwin:

I urge your support and co-sponsorship of the proposed Maritime and Energy Workforce Technical Training Enhancement Act, which would benefit Northeast Wisconsin Technical College (NWTC) and other colleges providing maritime and energy workforce training.

The Maritime and Energy Workforce Technical Training Enhancement Act would authorize creation of a new program to support capacity building to address the critical need for trained workers in the maritime and energy industries. This would include awarding competitive grants, and creation of a centers of excellence program in maritime and energy workforce technical training.

America's strength as a maritime nation relies on our global, coastal and inland commercial fleet, ports and intermodal facilities, and the maritime workforce that supports and operates U.S.-flagged vessels. The marine transportation system is a core component of our economic and national security, and it is vital to the growing domestic energy industry. NWTC is one of a handful of community and technical colleges that have established maritime and energy workforce training.

While the maritime workforce has proven to be strong and resilient, there is a need to upgrade the skills and capacity of the industry to ensure the future viability of the Merchant Marine. Jobs in the maritime industry, with a wide range of scope, continue to boom with international activity at America's ports. These jobs include operating and maintaining vessels, as well as staffing of numerous positions at port facilities. Education and training requirements vary depending on the type of job. Bachelor's degrees are required for marine officers and engineers, but qualification for most maritime employment positions can be obtained through associate degrees.

The Maritime and Energy Workforce Technical Training Enhancement Act would authorize support for capacity building in critical maritime training categories, including the following:

- Maritime logistics, supply chain management, shipbuilding, and ship repair.
- Training for such positions as tankerman, deckhand, able body seaman, firefighting, pilot training, marine diesel technician, marine gasoline engine technology, marine electrical, marine mechanical, maritime logistics, and maritime welding.

Rep. Gene Green (TX-29) plans to introduce this legislation with a bipartisan group of House co-sponsors. We understand that a Senate version of the bill is likely to be introduced as well. NWTC would benefit from capacity-building assistance under this proposed legislation. I urge your support and co-sponsorship. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,


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