

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515



THE NORTHEAST-MIDWEST HOUSE COALITION

GREAT LAKES TASK FORCE

October 29, 2015

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John Carter
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Lowey, Chairman Carter, and Ranking Member Roybal-Allard:

As you continue to craft appropriations legislation for fiscal year 2016, we urge you to include robust funding for the Commandant of the Coast Guard to select a design for and the construction of an American-made icebreaker that is capable of buoy tending to enhance icebreaking capacity on the Great Lakes.

It is troubling that the United States has only one icebreaker operating in the Great Lakes capable of initially breaking the extremely heavy ice seen in recent years. The Coast Guard argues that "Maintaining a reliable Great Lakes heavy icebreaking capability is essential." Icebreakers provide multi-mission capabilities such as supporting commerce by keeping open shipping lanes and conducting search and rescue missions to keep ships and their crews safe.

On May 18, 2015 the House unanimously passed H.R. 1987, the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2015, which authorizes funding in FY2016 and FY2017 for this purpose. While the Senate has not acted, we feel that the overwhelming support for this legislation merits funding for this critical national security asset.

House Report 114-115, which accompanied the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2015, noted concerns by the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee over the adequacy of the Coast Guard's icebreaking capability on the Great Lakes. Specifically noted in the report is that

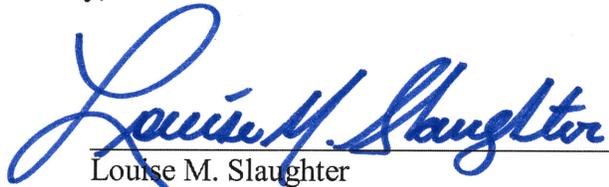
December 2013 to May 2014, 7 million fewer tons were carried by U.S. flagged vessels on the Great Lakes, costing the economy an estimated \$700 million and 4,000 jobs.”

Given the extraordinary impact that icebreakers have on our economy and safety, we hope you will provide the necessary resources to support an additional icebreaker for the Great Lakes region. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Sean P. Duffy
Member of Congress
Co-Chair, Great Lakes Task Force



Louise M. Slaughter
Member of Congress
Co-Chair, Great Lakes Task Force



Candice Miller
Member of Congress
Co-Chair, Great Lakes Task Force