



CONSORTIUM OF STATE MARITIME ACADEMIES
California • Maine • Massachusetts • Michigan • New York • Texas

NATIONAL SECURITY MULTI-MISSION SHIP FUNDING

The 2017 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) directed the Secretary of Transportation to complete the design of a National Security Multi-mission Vessel (NSMV) for the National Defense Reserve Fleet in order to allow construction of the NSMV to commence in fiscal year 2018. Toward this end, \$36 million was authorized in the 2017 NDAA to support the NSMV program. Now it is essential that \$36 million also be appropriated in the 2017 budget to fund the authorized design of the NSMV.

The NSMV will be used to replace the aging fleet of training ships at the state maritime academies (SMAs). Academy training ships are federal assets owned by the U.S. Maritime Administration (MARAD) and operated, maintained, and crewed by the respective SMA. They are the primary means for cadets to learn, train, and earn required sea time for a U.S. Coast Guard Merchant Mariner license.

These training vessels are aging, averaging over 37 years. The oldest vessel is the State University of New York (SUNY) Maritime's TS Empire State VI, which is 55 years old. The SMAs produce more than 70 percent of the new U.S.-licensed merchant marine officers each year. SUNY Maritime is the largest of the six maritime academies and should their vessel be taken out of service, the impact would ripple throughout the entire American maritime industry.

Above and beyond the importance of these vessels as training ships, they are needed in times of national emergency and for humanitarian relief. In fact, SMA training ships were used to house FEMA workers after Superstorm Sandy and Hurricane Katrina. The NSMV will be designed with enhanced emergency relief capabilities.

As these ships would be built in U.S. shipyards, they will provide an economic stimulus for our shipyards and the U.S. steel industry that is vital to our economy and national defense.

We believe that if you support the Jones Act, Cargo Preference, and Maritime Security Program, then funding the NSMV is essential in order to have sufficient mariners to support ocean and domestic fleets.

We urge Congress and the Administration to support full FY2017 and full FY2018 funding for the NSMV design and construction.