



SUPPORT FULL FY'25 FUNDING **FOR THE MARITIME SECURITY PROGRAM**

“As a retired U.S. Navy Rear Admiral with more than 30 years of service, I know the critical importance of our merchant marine to our national defense as well as to our economy. Particularly in a contested environment, it is American mariners who will answer the call—as they always have—to move the supplies we need to defeat any adversary.”

**Rear Admiral Ann Phillips, Maritime Administrator, Department of Transportation
(2022)**

OBJECTIVE

To fully fund the Maritime Security Program (MSP) in FY'25 at the Congressionally authorized (PL 116-92) level of \$318 million.

As history has proven, American mariners never fail to sail into harm's way when needed by the United States. There is no guarantee or reason to believe foreign crews will do the same. It is essential that Congress and the Administration stop the further loss of U.S.-flag vessels and the outsourcing of American maritime jobs. The choice for our Nation is simple: either the United States continues to entrust the security of our nation and the safety of American troops deployed overseas to U.S.-flag vessels and their U.S. citizen crews, or instead turns over America's security interests and the well-being of American troops to foreign flag, foreign crewed vessels which may or may not choose to support America and our allies.

One important step is to fully fund the Maritime Security Program.

BACKGROUND

The Maritime Security Program is a unique U.S. Government – U.S. private shipping industry partnership that provides the Department of Defense (DOD) with the commercial sealift readiness capability, global intermodal systems and U.S. citizen civilian mariners it needs to advance America's interests and to support American troops deployed around the world.

Originally enacted as Public Law 104-239, the Maritime Security Act of 1996 authorized the establishment of a maritime security fleet comprised of 47 militarily-useful, privately-owned U.S.-flag commercial vessels. Public Law 108-136, the National Defense Authorization Act of 2004, reauthorized and extended MSP for an additional ten years and expanded the maritime security fleet from 47 to 60 militarily-useful, privately-owned U.S.-flag commercial vessels. Currently authorized through FY'35, Public Law 116-92, the National Defense Authorization Act of 2020, authorizes \$318 million for the Maritime Security Program (MSP) in FY'25.

“Our organic capabilities are insufficient to meet our military requirements around the globe, and we are absolutely, inextricably linked. So, the Maritime Security program gives us that guaranteed access, and it is a great value for the dollar to ensure that we can have US-flagged, US-crewed ships available to support us into the future.” - - **General Jacqueline Van Ovost, Commander, United States Transportation Command (2022)**

NATIONAL SECURITY BENEFITS OF MSP

“With 85 percent of our forces based in the continental U.S., nearly 90 percent of our military equipment is expected to deploy via sealift in a major conflict. In order to deploy those forces, we require safe, reliable and ready U.S.-flagged vessels [and], mariners to crew those ships. . . .” **General Stephen Lyons, Commander, United States Transportation Command (2020)**

In its 2017–2018 maritime policy statement, the Navy League of the United States stated, [Failing to provide full funding for MSP] “could reduce reserve sealift readiness and capacity below levels that would fully meet the combatant commanders’ operational plans for major deployment of ground forces, which call for 95 percent of unit equipment and sustaining supplies to be moved by strategic sealift. Reduced funding will decrease the number of mariners employed on these vessels, and without adequate sealift and sealift manning, mission capability will be compromised.”

Since the inception of military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan in 2002, 98 percent of the cargoes were transported to the region on either U.S.-flag commercial vessels or U.S. Government owned and/or controlled vessels - all of which are crewed by U.S. citizen civilian merchant mariners. Since 2009, privately-owned U.S.-flag commercial vessels and their civilian U.S. citizen crews have transported more than 90 percent of the sustainment cargo needed to support U.S. military operations and rebuilding programs in Iraq and Afghanistan. Most importantly, vessels enrolled in MSP carried 99 percent of these cargoes.

“MSP has provided access to required commercial U.S.-flag shipping assets, while also supporting the pool of Merchant Mariners needed to operate the Military Sealift Command’s Surge and Ready Reserve Fleet. In this way, MSP significantly contributes to the supply of Merchant Mariners available to serve on U.S. vessels in time of war while mitigating future

risk to our national commercial capability.” - - General Darren McDew Commander, United States Transportation Command (2020)

ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF MSP

“It would cost approximately \$13 billion in taxpayer funds to replicate vessel capacity alone without the MSP.” - - 2023 – 2024 Maritime Policy, Navy League of the United States

In addition, the United States Transportation Command has estimated that it would cost the U.S. Government an additional \$52 billion to replicate the global intermodal systems made available to DOD by MSP contractors who are continuously developing, maintaining and upgrading their logistics systems. Instead of the estimated \$65 billion it would cost the taxpayer if there were no MSP and the government had to replicate this commercial sealift capability, a fully funded MSP will continue to provide DOD with the militarily-useful U.S.-flag vessels, U.S. civilian maritime manpower, and the global intermodal systems it needs at a cost to the taxpayer of \$318 million in FY’25 as authorized by Congress.

REQUEST FOR ACTION

We ask all Members of the House of Representatives and Senate to urge the Committees on Appropriations to provide full funding for MSP at its Congressionally authorized level for FY’25.

April 10, 2024