

February 2, 2021

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

As the process continues in developing the next COVID-19 relief package, it is critical that this package include emergency relief for our Nation's maritime transportation system. In the year since the virus was first detected in the United States the maritime industry has endured significant hardships and has experienced substantial impacts to business. Immediate steps must be taken to ensure that the whole of the maritime transportation system has the resources necessary to address the unique and unexpected challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our maritime transportation system and the critical workers employed throughout this system have kept vital goods moving to medical professionals and first responders, have ensured that our Nation's shelves remain stocked, and have enabled commerce to continue flowing during these uncertain times. Ports that are located in rural areas have propped up local economies, dispensing critical public services while providing assistance to small businesses, oftentimes at the ports' own expense. Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, over 650,000 Americans were directly employed in jobs generated through the movement of marine cargo and through vessel activity while 30.8 million total jobs were supported by cargo moving through America's deep-draft ports.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 crisis has had a significantly negative impact on the maritime industry. Despite container surges at several large ports, commercial cargo volumes have plummeted across the industry – total waterborne trade volume is down 5.5% compared to last year, while the value of this trade has crashed by 12.7% totaling \$200 billion. Passenger movements remain virtually nonexistent with operations not expected to resume for months. Expenses have greatly increased due to COVID-19 protocols and precautions that have been put in place to ensure the health and safety of staff, and these extra costs borne by the industry to keep supply lines open are above and beyond the normal costs of operations.

With an uncertain outlook, these trends are likely to continue and intensify as the COVID-19 pandemic peaks over the coming months. To date, no dedicated funding has been provided in any of the COVID-19 legislative packages to assist the maritime transportation system despite emergency relief being provided to other modes of transportation.

We urge you to include emergency relief for the maritime industry in the next COVID-19 package through the Maritime Transportation System Emergency Relief Program, which was created by the National Defense Authorization Act of 2020 (P.L. 116-283). This new program, the only one of its kind, authorizes the Maritime Administration to solicit applications for aid from those across the maritime industry, both inland and coastal, and provide grants to those most in need due to emergencies or disasters. This includes aid to help mitigate the impacts of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

It is essential that the U.S. maritime industry maintain a state of readiness and sustain our critical responsibility in the supply chains that provide food, medical equipment, and other essential goods for

the citizens of this country. This emergency relief will help ensure that maritime operations continue at the high level that Americans have come to depend on. We hope that you will provide this critical emergency relief to the maritime industry as additional COVID-19 response measures are considered.

Sincerely,

American Association of Port Authorities

American Great Lakes Ports Association

Association of Ship Brokers and Agents

Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway Association

Big River Coalition

California Association of Port Authorities

Columbia River Steamship Operators
Association

Connecticut Maritime Association

Dredging Contractors of America

Florida Ports Council

Gulf Ports Association

Inland Rivers, Ports and Terminals, Inc.

International Freight Forwarders & Customs
Brokers Association of New Orleans

International Longshoremen's Association,
AFL-CIO, CLC

International Longshore and Warehouse
Union

International Propeller Club of the United
States

Jacksonville Marine Transportation Exchange

Marine Exchange of the Puget Sound

Maritime Association of the Port of New York
/ New Jersey

Maritime Exchange for the Delaware River
and Bay

National Association of Maritime
Organizations

National Association of Waterfront Employers

National Maritime Safety Association

National Waterways Conference

North Atlantic Ports Association

Louisiana Maritime Association

Oregon Public Ports Association

Pacific Northwest Waterways Association

Passenger Vessel Association

Ports Association of Louisiana

The Propeller Club of New Orleans

Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO

Virginia Maritime Association

Washington Public Ports Association

Waterways Council, Inc

West Gulf Maritime Association

World Trade Center of New Orleans