

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 29, 2024

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20003

Dear President Biden,

The United States is at an inflection point in international maritime affairs. Our peer competitor, the People's Republic of China (PRC), is expanding its strategic influence over the oceans. It is building a global maritime network, on which the American economy and critical maritime supply chains have become increasingly reliant. Meanwhile, the U.S. has failed to give proper attention to the elements of our national sea power.

U.S. maritime infrastructure is aging, including in our naval and commercial shipyards, which once produced the world's finest ships. We have allowed the U.S. flagged international trading fleet to decline precipitously, underinvesting in our Merchant Marine and maritime workforce to man our ships and shipyards. Simultaneously, our global competitors are strengthening their maritime industries and asymmetric forces are threatening freedom of navigation and the international law of the sea. PRC's intimidation in the South China Sea and the Houthi attacks in the Red Sea serve as recent examples of the risks we face in the maritime domain.

In response to these maritime risks, congressional and administration leaders across the enterprise have called for action. For example, your own Secretary of the Navy has announced a strategy of "Maritime Statecraft" to create favorable conditions for U.S. and allied maritime activities. While his actions are important, "de-risking" the maritime domain from our strategic competitors requires a national focus with Presidential attention and resources and Congressional support.

Therefore, we ask the administration to take the following leadership actions, embracing a bold and clear vision:

1) Establish an interagency maritime policy coordinator, reporting to the President, with commensurate rank and authority to synchronize national maritime policy and influence industrial base resource decisions across military, civil, and commercial dimensions.

2) Issue a Presidential Determination that establishes commercial, civil, and military shipbuilding and shipping industries, with their associated domestic infrastructure and workforces, as elements on the nation's critical infrastructure sectors list and authorize the

Department of Defense to utilize its Defense Production Act Title III authorities to invest in the commercial shipbuilding and shipping industries and civilian infrastructure and workforces, in coordination with the Maritime Administration.

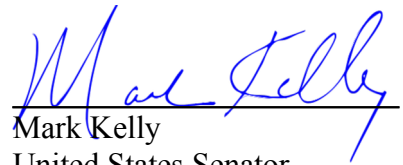
3) Develop a national strategy focused on “de-risking” the U.S. maritime domain from PRC and other asymmetric or emerging maritime threats, recognizing that our security and economic way of life relies on open and free sea lines of communication.

America is—and will always be—a maritime nation. But after years of neglect, changing the trajectory of our shipbuilding and shipping industries is a task that will be measured in decades, not days, months, or years. We stand at an inflection point. We must act now--before it is too late--to reinvigorate American and allied maritime power on the seas.

Sincerely,



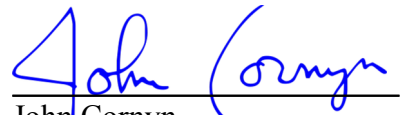
Michael Waltz
Member of Congress



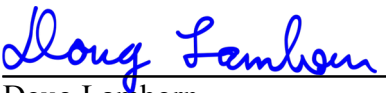
Mark Kelly
United States Senator



John Garamendi
Member of Congress



John Cornyn
United States Senator



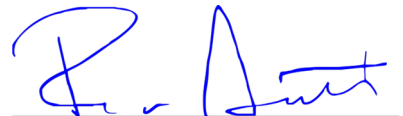
Doug Lamborn
Member of Congress



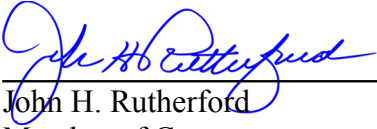
Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Brad Finstad
Member of Congress



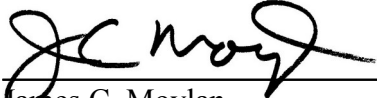
Rick Scott
United States Senator



John H. Rutherford
Member of Congress



Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator



James C. Moylan
Member of Congress



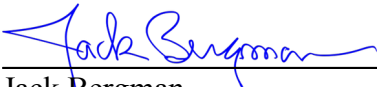
John Boozman
United States Senator



Rich McCormick, MD, MBA
Member of Congress



Nick LaLota
Member of Congress



Jack Bergman
Member of Congress



C. Scott Franklin
Member of Congress



Byron Donalds
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Neal P. Dunn, M.D.
Member of Congress



James R. Baird
Member of Congress