

THE USA SHIPBUILDING COALITION

June 11, 2026

Dear Senator/Representative:

The USA Shipbuilding Coalition strongly urges our government to quickly act to revitalize our country's maritime, shipbuilding and logistics capabilities to restore our maritime power and strengthen our economic and national security.

The Coalition was created to unite labor and management in support of the effort to address our country's critical needs in this sector. Labor and management coming together in common purpose demonstrates the necessity of this moment.

There's support across the sector, from factory workers to industry CEOs. There is bipartisan support in the House and Senate and alignment between Congress and the Administration in offering comprehensive and meaningful actions that will meet our country's needs.

There is simply no excuse not to get something done. The time to act is now.

For decades, America has witnessed the hollowing out of its shipbuilding sector and the supply chains that support it. Tens of thousands of jobs have been lost. At the same time, China has become the dominant player in the sector because of its illegal trade practices.

China cornered the market in new ship orders with more than two-thirds of world orders on their books. The percentage of global shipping controlled by Chinese carriers has tripled since the early 2000s. Their investments in, and efforts to control global ports continue to grow unabated. While China expanded its maritime power, America allowed critical industrial capabilities to erode. China's success has come at our expense.

In 2024, American shipyards had orders for three cargo ocean going vessels while China was building over 3,400.¹ This stunning gap is not merely economic – it is a strategic vulnerability.

Shipbuilding and maritime power, and associated logistics support, is key to our future and our security. A strong merchant marine and revitalized shipbuilding, repair and maintenance capabilities, along with a vibrant maritime industrial base and the needed mariners must be a national priority.

Roughly eighty percent of world trade by volume transits by sea. We have learned over recent years – including the past few months – that strong and resilient supply chains, and the transportation infrastructure to support that, are a critical vulnerability.

Furthermore, it is a national security risk to outsource our military capabilities and capacity to another country. Over the past year we have again seen drastic geopolitical shifts. We know that allied and U.S. interests may not always align. It would be misguided to assume that in times of conflict the ability to surge capacity through another country will always be there.

We simply cannot rely on other countries to do this critical work for us. We must first revitalize our own industry and fill out our own orderbooks. We can of course cooperate with other countries, but it is imperative that we end our overdependence on foreign suppliers. Maritime dominance was once a defining factor in our country's geopolitical strength – let us once again demonstrate that power.

While some might argue that the capacity to achieve these goals no longer exists, the Coalition, representing both industry and labor in the shipbuilding sector, can definitively say that is not true. Across the country, the members of our Coalition continue to make investments in both our yards and our workforce, demonstrating our nation's capabilities – but we can't do it alone. Not with what we are up against.

We have the wherewithal; we just need our government to follow through with investments and policies that provide certainty for our sector to begin building again.

Revitalizing American shipbuilding has garnered significant bipartisan support. The inventory of actions in the Administration's Maritime Action Plan and the SHIPS for America Act is a strong foundation. Against the backdrop of the broad political challenges that exist, this is one major policy area that unites our leaders and must be acted upon.

Our Coalition stands ready to work with Congress and the Administration in moving this agenda forward to protect our national security, create jobs, and grow our economy.

¹ https://it4v7.interactiv-doc.fr/html/annual_review_2025_digital_668/ & <https://www.progressivepolicy.org/american-shipyards-are-building-three-of-the-5448-large-commercial-vessels-on-order-worldwide/>

American ships must be built here, and we must begin building them again before it is too late.

A failure to act is a decision to continue to hollow out our industry, trade away our strategic capabilities, and expose our security to greater risk. We simply cannot afford that.

The time to act is now. Let's get it done.

Sincerely,

Michael Wessel

Michael Wessel
President
USA Shipbuilding Coalition