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Kevin M. Dempsey
President and CEO

September 1, 2026

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Chairman
Senate Committee on Armed Services
228 Russell Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Armed Services
228 Russell Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Wicker and Ranking Member Reed:

For over three-quarters of a century, the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) has been a legislative constant. Annual passage of the NDAA is a tribute to the bipartisan consensus that has guided national security policy. As the Senate Armed Services Committee continues its work on the NDAA for Fiscal Year (FY) 2027, there is an opportunity for the committee to take bold steps to rebuild our nation's shipbuilding and maritime industrial base. For this reason, we urge you to ensure that the Senate version of the NDAA for FY2027 includes as much of the bipartisan Shipbuilding and Harbor Infrastructure for Prosperity and Security (SHIPS) for America Act of 2025 (S. 1541) as possible.

Commercial shipbuilding and the broader maritime sector play an essential role in both American economic competitiveness and the American defense industrial base. Unfortunately, while the American shipbuilding sector has languished, China's has flourished. Today, China produces 1000 ships a year while the United States produces ten. Policy measures are needed to revitalize domestic shipbuilding to address these challenges and enable the creation of a stable, sustainable shipbuilding sector. Essential to rehabilitating U.S. shipbuilding capabilities is maximizing the utilization of domestic industries that are part of the shipbuilding supply chain, especially American steelmakers. The American steel industry manufactures high-quality steel products, such as steel plate, that are essential materials used for construction of commercial and defense vessels.

Bipartisan, bicameral legislation – the SHIPS for America Act of 2025¹ – advances a comprehensive approach to revitalizing the United States shipbuilding and commercial maritime industries. Having a healthy, robust American-flagged commercial shipbuilding sector will create tens of thousands of jobs at U.S. shipyards and within the entire shipbuilding supply chain across the nation. This will lead to increased

¹ S. 1541 introduced by Sens. Kelly and Young (<https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/senate-bill/1541>); H.R. 3151 introduced by Reps. Kelly and Gramendi (<https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/3151>)

Chair Wicker and Ranking Member Reed

August 31, 2026

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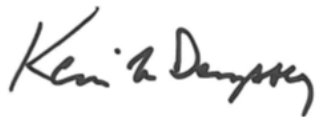
demand for domestic steel plate and other highly-specialized steel products, in addition to other materials essential to build ships in the U.S.

Many of the key provisions of the legislation are recognized as important policy items in the Maritime Action Plan, released by the White House in February.² Specifically, President Trump's Maritime Action Plan and the SHIPS for America Act share the same basic goals: 1) increase domestic shipbuilding capacity, 2) revitalize and expand the maritime industrial base, 3) train the next generation of maritime workers, and 4) enhance national security including by collaborating with allies and trusted partners.

We were strong supporters of including the SHIPS for America Act in the House-passed NDAA for FY2027. We were pleased that the House-passed bill includes a number of important provisions from the bill that will help revive the domestic shipbuilding supply chain – from ship construction to workforce training. We urge the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) to go further and include even more of the SHIPS for America Act in its version of the NDAA for FY2027.

The SHIPS for America Act will strengthen and expand the U.S. shipbuilding industrial base – enhancing U.S. national and economic security and restoring the competitiveness of America's shipbuilding sector, and increasing demand for key manufactured materials, like steel. Accordingly, we urge the SASC to support the inclusion of even more of the SHIPS for America Act than was in the House-passed FY2027 NDAA.

Sincerely,



Kevin M. Dempsey
President and CEO

Cc:

Senate Majority Leader, John Thune

Senate Minority Leader, Charles Schumer

Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, Mike Johnson

Democratic Leader, Hakeem Jeffries

Chair Ted Cruz; Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee

Ranking Member Maria Cantwell; Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee

Chair Mike Rogers, House Armed Services Committee

Ranking Member Adam Smith, House Armed Services Committee

² *America's Maritime Action Plan*; THE WHITE HOUSE (Feb. 2026); available at:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Restoring-Americas-Maritime-Dominance.pdf>.