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Maritime and Shipbuilding Industries Call on Congress to Put American National and Economic Security First

Maritime Executives take to Capitol Hill as Mariners and Shipbuilders send over 1,900 Letters to Congressional Leaders; U.S. House responds in Strong Support of Jones Act

New Orleans, LA – The Offshore Marine Service Association (OMSA) today announced that over 1,900 letters calling for timely and proper enforcement of the Jones Act have been sent to Congressional leaders over the past two weeks. These letters preceded the visits to Capitol Hill of over a dozen maritime leaders representing the offshore marine service sector to show their support of the recent U.S. Customs & Border Protection (CBP) revocation notice, a ruling that would reward American workers, vessel owners, and U.S. shipbuilders with the creation of 3,200 new jobs.

“The offshore service industry is ready, willing, and capable of completing the work covered by CBP’s action, having recently invested \$2 billion in U.S. shipyards on vessels tailored to safely completing this work without impeding offshore energy exploration or production,” said **Aaron Smith, President and CEO, Offshore Marine Service Association**. “After nearly eight years of review, CBP is taking the correct action to restore the congressional intent of the Jones Act and open this market to U.S. mariners on U.S.-built vessels, owned by U.S. companies. Further delay will only hurt American mariners and shipbuilders while continuing to benefit foreign vessels, shipbuilders and crews, domestically operating contrary to U.S. law.”

Following the January 18, 2017 notice published in the *Customs Bulletin*, numerous Congressional leaders have vocalized their support for this corrective action taken by CBP, noting both the economic and national security benefits provided by the lawful interpretation of the Jones Act, and the urgency for stopping foreign interests from influencing U.S. law for the sole benefit of foreign shipbuilders and operators. On March 30, 2017, 33 bipartisan members of the House of Representatives signed onto a letter to Secretary Kelly of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to express their support for CBP to quickly bring to a close the implementation of the revocation and modification of the flawed letter rulings. A copy of the letter can be found [here](#).

“I applaud CBP’s efforts to correct a flawed interpretation of the Jones Act. The Jones Act is a critical tool to ensure America maintains a shipbuilding and maritime capacity, which benefits both our economic and national security. As Chairman of the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Subcommittee, I’ll continue to fight against efforts to weaken the Jones Act, which only serve to harm American jobs and degrade military readiness,” **said Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-CA).**

“I applaud the corrective action taken by U.S. Customs and Border Protection that supports the rule of law and reinforces the federal government’s compliance with the Jones Act,” **said Majority Whip Steve Scalise (R-LA).** “This corrective action is the right thing to do for Louisiana workers and will also benefit the American economy. In addition, unlike so many job-killing regulations and rules the Obama Administration issued on its way out the door, this agency ruling from Customs actually reverses some of the economic damage the Obama Administration allowed to take place on its watch. It will help to ensure the oil and natural gas industry in the Gulf, which is vital to local and national economic growth, will continue to have a robust supply of U.S. crews and vessels to strengthen America’s energy security and help bring reliable energy to families across the nation.”

“As the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation, I welcome CBP’s notice to address the letter rulings that have created loopholes undermining the Jones Act, and I urge Secretary Kelly to implement this notice as quickly as possible. The Jones Act is vital to our shipbuilding industry and our military readiness. Restoring its integrity will create good-paying American jobs and strengthen our national security,” **said Rep. John Garamendi (D-CA).**

For more information about the recent CBP action and the current inconsistencies with the lawful interpretation of the Jones Act, please visit www.offshoremarine.org/supportcbp.

About Offshore Marine Service Association (OMSA)

The Offshore Marine Service Association represents more than 200 member companies, including approximately 100 firms that own and operate marine service vessels. These sophisticated vessels, some 1200 in number, connect America with its offshore energy resources, providing every pipe, wrench, computer, barrel of fuel, and gallon of drinking water to rigs and platforms, as well as transporting tens of thousands of workers to and from the facilities. This critical flow of supplies keeps the heart of America's energy industry pumping around the clock. For more information, please visit www.offshoremarine.org.