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2ND DISTRICT, LOUISIANA

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April 13, 2017

Mr. Glen E. Vereb  
Director, Border Security and Trade Compliance Division  
Office of Trade, Regulations and Rulings  
U.S. Customs and Border Protection  
90 K Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20229

Re: **Request for expeditious implementation of Proposed Modification and Revocation of Ruling Letters Related to Customs Application of the Jones Act to the Transportation of Certain Merchandise and Equipment between Coastwise Points**

Dear Mr. Vereb:

Since the beginning of our nation, the maritime industry has played the vital role of connecting people, goods and information worldwide. Every day, the maritime industry facilitates trade, commerce and creates jobs in the United States, and because of this, I write in support of Custom and Border Protection's (CBP) proposal to ensure the nation's trade laws for vessel transportation activities on the Outer Continental Shelf are able to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The proposed notice published January 18, 2017 in the *Customs Bulletin*, will reinstate components of the Jones Act to promote offshore transportation activities, and will allow for continued development of natural resources and trade on the Outer Continental Shelf, while also providing employment opportunities for hardworking Americans.

As mandated by the Jones Act, the Customs proposal requiring coastwise transportation of merchandise on the Outer Continental Shelf to U.S. crewed, U.S. built, U.S. owned, and U.S.-flagged vessels is a necessary step for the continued development and operation of the U.S. merchant marine industry. The Jones Act is vital to national and economic security, and the CBP proposal will positively enhance U.S. transportation operations.

There are numerous American-built and owned vessels with U.S.-citizen mariners that are ready, willing, and able to perform Jones Act-required transportation functions. As the maritime industry continues to grow and evolve, it is imperative that the Jones Act is

applied in a way that will promote innovation and encourage domestic competition in the maritime industry. In fact, since the first 2009 notice from CBP, American ship owners have invested over \$2 billion in Jones Act vessels to perform this work.

On behalf of the U.S.-flag maritime industry and American mariners, and in support of our country's national and economic security, I strongly support CBP's proposal to restore key elements of the Jones Act by finalizing the modification and revocation of the CBP ruling letters as set forth in the CBP Notice.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "C. L. Richmond", with a large, stylized flourish extending to the right.

**Cedric L. Richmond**