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October 9, 2012

Senator John D. Rockefeller
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Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Commerce,
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Representative John Mica
Chairman
House Committee on Transportation and
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Representative Nick Rahall
Ranking Member
House Committee on Transportation and
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Washington, DC 20510

RE: Provisions of maritime priority in the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2012

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members:

As the House and Senate consider the differences between the House- and Senate-passed versions of the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2012 (HR 2838), I am writing in support of critical maritime provisions found in each version of the bill. These provisions are supported by a number of my constituents, who depend on the maritime industry and coordination with the Coast Guard. I strongly support and urge you to retain:

- Sec. 703 of H.R. 2838 as passed by the House, "Discharges Incidental to the Normal Operation of a Covered Vessel," which exempts fishing vessels and vessels less than 79 feet long from certain permit requirements. This section alleviates a major regulatory burden that will adversely affect the fishing industry.
- Sec. 405 of H.R. 2838 as passed by the House, "Maritime Liens on Fishing Permits," which bars certain maritime liability laws from establishing maritime liens on state or federal fishing licenses and authorizes civil actions to enforce maritime liens on such licenses. This section will provide legal protection for the financial stability and livelihood of many fishermen.
- Sec. 501 of H.R. 2838 as passed by the Senate, "Central Bering Sea Potential Place of Refuge," which directs the Commandant of the Coast Guard to coordinate with other

federal agencies to designate ice-free facilities in the Central Bering Sea, which is critical to the safety of Alaskan mariners and fisheries.

- Sec. 504 of H.R. 2838 as passed by the Senate, "Report on Development of Arctic Deep Water Port," which directs the Commandant of the Coast Guard to study the feasibility of establishing a deep-water Arctic port. Such a port will allow the United States to guard its territorial claims and its economic interests in the Arctic as a decrease in seasonal ice leads to increased marine activity.
- Sec. 308 of H.R. 2838 as passed by the House, "Assessment of Needs for Additional Coast Guard Presence in High Latitude Regions," which directs the Secretary of Homeland Security to report on the need for additional prevention and response capability in the Arctic and Antarctic regions. This provision will ensure the Coast Guard planning to meet growing maritime needs in these areas.
- Sec. 615 of H.R. 2838 as passed by the House, "Conveyance of Decommissioned Coast Guard Cutter STORIS," which directs the Commandant of the Coast Guard to convey, without consideration, the decommissioned STORIS to the non-profit Storis Museum. The Coast Guard has an amazing history in Alaska of which STORIS is a big part. It is only fitting that we help preserve that history for future generations and visitors.

I am also encouraged to see the inclusion of multiple provisions in both versions of this bill that I hope are retained. The sections addressing service member housing, multi-year procurement for National Security Cutters and maintaining polar icebreaking capabilities are not only important for the state of Alaska, but are of critical consequence to the entire nation. In addition, I understand the immense amount of time and effort that go into a multi-year authorization but also know that the actions authorized in this bill have been developed based on experience, capabilities and community input. It is important that these factors are included in conference negotiations.

Thank you for your attention to these requests. If your staffs have any questions about these matters, they may contact my staff members, Jeremy Price at (202) 224-9306 or Warren Wright at (202) 224-6139.

Sincerely,



Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator