



MARITIME EXCHANGE

for the Delaware River and Bay

Leading the Way to Port Progress

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To: Tristate Congressional Delegation

The Maritime Exchange for the Delaware River and Bay writes concerning a time-sensitive matter of extreme importance to Delaware River commerce.

In December, we requested your support to ensure that total funding is included in the 2018 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Act for the Maritime Administration to construct two training vessels for U.S. maritime academies. As you may be aware, an appropriation of \$300 million for a first ship is set and was included in last year's budget. An additional \$300 million to build a second vessel is in the 2019 THUD budget and included in both Senate and House Appropriations. This budget, however, is stalled due to ongoing negotiations on the border wall issue.

Over and above their value as state-of-the-art training vessels, these ships will also serve as first response ships to support relief efforts for natural disasters.

It is a distinct priority for our regional port complex that the Philly Shipyard be awarded the construction contract to build these two ships.

Simply stated, if the Philly Shipyard is not successful at winning this contract, it is quite conceivable that it will find itself in an unsustainable position. Just a few years ago, the shipyard employed an average of 1,200 workers, and scores of regional suppliers remain dependent on its continued operations. If the shipyard does not receive the award for this contract, a dramatic and negative impact on employment is the forecast for the foreseeable future. The viability of the Philly Shipyard depends entirely on a contract to build these vessels.

The Department of Transportation, charged with naming the construction manager who will choose the shipyard to build these ships, is also awaiting assurance that the pending appropriation will be signed into law.

Delaware River regional Congressional members must waste no time in working together to help pass this appropriation. It is our sincere hope you will also be willing to help the shipyard in its bid to win the MarAd contract.

We respectfully request your support to help the Philly Shipyard maintain its operation and its economic contribution to the tristate region. In addition to the financial gains, a local shipyard building these ships would be a matter of great pride for our region.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. Please contact me at 215-925-2615 with any questions you may have or if you need further information.

Sincerely,

Dennis Rochford
President

cc: Lisa Hember