

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 23, 2018

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
H-305, The Capitol

The Honorable Kevin Yoder
Chairman
Dept. of Homeland Security Subcommittee
H-305, The Capitol

Dear Chairman Frelinghuysen and Chairman Yoder,

While we extend our congratulations for completing a Fiscal Year 2019 Homeland Security Appropriations Act draft, we write to underscore concerns expressed by Ranking Member Nita Lowey and Subcommittee Ranking Member Lucille Roybal-Allard that the bill fails to provide \$750 million requested by the Administration for a heavy polar icebreaker. The bill also fails to include funding for a twelfth National Security Cutter (NSC) for the Coast Guard and cuts its Research & Development budget by \$10 million, while wasting a staggering \$4.9 billion on a border wall and increasing the Immigration and Customs Enforcement budget by \$328 million. We urge you in the strongest possible terms to reconsider this misallocation of resources, which would undermine all eleven of the Coast Guard's statutory missions and place our nation at a distinct economic, geopolitical, and national security disadvantage for decades to come.

According to a 2013 Department of Homeland Security Mission Needs Statement, the United States requires a fleet of three heavy and three medium icebreakers to adequately fulfill its missions in the Arctic and Antarctic. We currently have only one of each—the 18-year-old medium polar icebreaker *Healy*, and the 42-year-old heavy polar icebreaker *Polar Star*.

Compared to Russia, which has 41 icebreakers far superior in capability and technology, we are woefully unprepared for the reality of rising global temperatures and melting sea ice. Russia has claimed natural resources and territory in the Arctic that exceed its internationally recognized rights, and is making investments in its ice-capable military assets to back those claims. China has also set its sights on a strong Arctic presence as part of its “Polar Silk Road” because “whoever has control over the Arctic route will control the new passage of world economics and international strategies.”¹ Trade along the Northern Sea Route increased by 50 percent in 2017, and could increase sevenfold by 2030, shaving off thousands of miles' worth of shipping costs.

Affirming America's important role as an Arctic nation, Congress committed to an accelerated timeline to deliver its first new heavy polar icebreaker by 2023. The President requested \$750 million toward this goal in his Supplemental Budget Request this year, and the Senate

¹ Li Zhenfu, director of Dalian Maritime University's research center for polar maritime studies, as quoted in Foreign Policy Magazine's article “China's Ready to Cash In on a Melting Arctic” at <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/05/01/chinas-ready-to-cash-in-on-a-melting-arctic/>

Appropriations Committee delivered on this request in its recently-reported bill. The Senate also included funding for a twelfth NSC to support the Coast Guard's work to interdict drugs and smugglers before they reach U.S. shores. In 2017 alone, the Coast Guard interdicted 224 metric tons of cocaine with an estimated street value of over \$6.6 billion.

To keep these important Coast Guard acquisition programs on track, we strongly urge you to follow suit and amend your bill to include \$750 million for a new heavy polar icebreaker and \$72.6 million for the NSC program. We also urge you to restore the \$10 million cut from its Research & Development budget, which supports increased efficiency through the use of new technology. Each of these investments is crucial in keeping the Coast Guard *semper paratus*, always ready.

Sincerely,



John Garamendi



Peter DeFazio



Rick Larsen



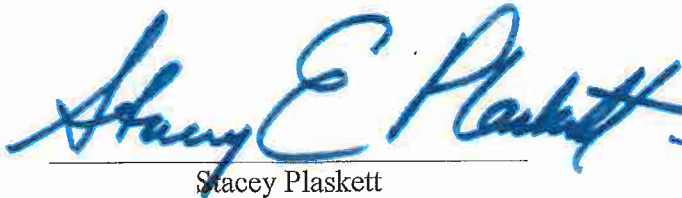
Alan S. Lowenthal



Donald Norcross



Carol Shea-Porter



Stacey Plaskett



Joe Courtney

Cc: Appropriations Committee Members