

**76 PHILLIPS ROAD
LISBON, CONNECTICUT 06351**

February 21, 2025

RE: SL7expo Letter of Support

To whom it may concern,

I am a U.S. Navy veteran and attorney whose practice has been focused on the U.S. maritime industry for the past twenty-five years.

Commercial maritime, international trade and intermodalism are the primary drivers the United States economy. Moreover, a viable U.S. maritime industry and a cadre of trained mariners is an indispensable component of our national defense. At present, however, the U.S. maritime industry suffers from a critical shortage of trained personnel to sustain our commercial maritime activities and support the military sealift needed for our national defense. As a vital national asset, the U.S. maritime industry is long overdue for substantial investment by the Federal Government remedy this deficiency.

SL7expo is a group of industry professionals that is engaged in the creation of a national maritime education and exposition center to provide national level support in the promotion of commercial maritime and intermodal commerce, career development, and education. In particular, SL7expo is investigating the preservation of an SL-7 RO/RO container vessel as the centerpiece of a Smithsonian level national maritime educational center.

This is an effort of national significance in promoting maritime commerce and careers and the most realistic approach at devoting Federal Government resources to improve maritime industry recruitment and remedy the present shortage of maritime personnel on a long-term basis.

I strongly support SL7expo's efforts. I urge the federal government to provide the foundational support needed to make this effort a reality and ask the Federal Government to take immediate action in this regard.

I hope to be able to actively participate in the operation of this center to further advance its and the nation's goals of sustaining a strong national maritime industry. With a commitment by the Federal government to provide the financial foundation, I also pledge my in-kind support in a cooperative effort to strengthen the entire industry.

Very truly yours,

Alan M. Weigel

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