



Maritime Association Port of NY/NJ

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Since 1873

Subject: National Maritime Education and Exposition Center

To Whom it May Concern:

On behalf of the Maritime Association of the Port of New York and New Jersey (MAPONY/NJ), I write to express our strong support for the development of a National Maritime Education and Exposition Center and to endorse the efforts of SL7Expo.

We have a significant and vested interest in the health and viability of the commercial maritime and intermodal sectors—not only in the Port of New York and New Jersey, but across the nation and globally.

As the largest port complex on the East Coast, the Port of New York and New Jersey supports over 500,000 jobs and contributes billions of dollars in annual economic activity. The maritime industry is critically dependent on a skilled mariner workforce to maintain and grow this essential infrastructure. Unfortunately, public awareness and understanding of the industry's complexity and importance have diminished, placing vessels, cargo, and port operations at increased risk.

Commercial maritime, international trade, and intermodal logistics are foundational to the functioning of the global economy. Just as importantly, a strong U.S. maritime industry and a trained cadre of mariners are vital to national security. Today, we face serious shortages of qualified maritime personnel, threatening both commercial operations and our national defense capabilities, including military sealift.

SL7Expo, led by a group of experienced industry professionals, is working to establish a National Maritime Education and Exposition Center that will promote commercial maritime and intermodal commerce, career development, and public education on a national level.

A key element of their proposal includes the preservation of an SL-7 RO/RO container vessel as the centerpiece of a Smithsonian-level maritime education facility—an initiative that would highlight the industry's historical and strategic significance.

We strongly support SL7Expo's vision and urge the federal government to provide the funding necessary to bring this project to fruition. MAPONY/NJ is committed to advocating for this effort and stands ready to work with our federal partners to advance this critical initiative that will benefit the entire maritime sector and the nation as a whole.

Sincerely,

Stephen Lyman
Executive Director
Maritime Association of the Port of New York and New Jersey