

November 9, 2024

Re: SL7expo Letter of Support.

To whom it may concern,

Martin & Ottaway is a Marine Consulting firm that has been in continuous operation since 1875. Over the years it has been involved in the growth of the US commercial maritime industry and in more recent decades has been heavily involved in the growth of intermodalism.

Commercial maritime, international trade and intermodalism are primary drivers of the world as we know it today. Moreover, a viable US maritime industry and cadre of trained mariners is an indispensable component of our national defense. Meanwhile, we are presently dealing with a serious shortage of trained maritime personnel both to sustain our commercial maritime industry and our national defense capabilities in support of military sealift.

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.

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

With a commitment by the Federal government to provide the financial foundation, we, as a maritime organization, also pledge our in-kind and financial support in a cooperative effort to strengthen the entire industry.

Very truly yours,



Rik van Hemmen, P.E.
President