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To Whom this may concern:

As an active member in the US Merchant Maritime industry, I write to express my strong support for the development of a National Maritime Education and Exposition Center and to endorse the efforts of SL7 Expo.

I think it is a fantastic idea. It would be great if somehow funding and a location could be found in a port, such as NY/NJ or Baltimore where many tourists, schools, colleges, universities and general public can have access to this historical learning center.

My reasons why:

As we all know a US built, US operated and US crewed maritime fleet has been almost totally decimated over the past 50 years by the financial issues involved in maintaining US standards and quality. Ultimately this has weakened America as a nation where we are now dependent on foreign entities to move our goods in and out of America in peace and time of war... it is critical to put light on this demise of the US Merchant Marine. A museum/exposition/recruiting center can be a means that can bring attention to this critical need to maintain the United States of America as the leader in Global trade.

With President Trump's initiative to build New US Flag Bottoms, built and manufactured in the United States there is a tremendous shortage of trained manpower. Technology today has certainly changed the life style of the years gone by for merchant mariners where a C/E can operate a vessel remotely. Travel is fast and quick and time away from home can be managed in more hospitable manner. Future technology will even more increase automation of the vessels, but needs educated and trained personnel. Onboard living conditions have certainly improved and we need to show our cadets at our Merchant Marine Academies it is great education and future career.

As we rebuild the US Merchant Marine, which will be a long term project, we need public support and manpower to support this project.

I remember going to the SL-7 new builds in Rotterdam going back to the early 70's and see these unbelievable "Steam" vessels with steam drum so large you could almost walk about

in them. Later on I sailed coastwise on one and was impressed when you went up on deck from the engine room by the speed and wind that you could hardly stand as wind would knock you over. I also spent many years training, treating and inspecting the boilers on all the SL ships as they came into Port Newark on their monthly visits and got know the engine rooms quite well.

SL-7's are great ships and preserving them for history would progress the knowledge and need for US built, US operated vessels and would be good for the Nation. I hope more attention can be brought to Washington to see the importance of promoting the US Merchant Marine to the public and overall strengthen America.

I hope that getting this information to the right people in Washington will work to fund such a project. I trust these efforts will bring light on the importance of such a project and show there is more than a need for just a museum. The SL-7's will bring attention to the importance and benefits of a strong Merchant Fleet for the future well being of the nation. The US Merchant Marine is certainly a great part of the Golden Age of the Nation and can continue to contribute to the greatness of the Nation.

Regards,

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