



September 29, 2025

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA), I am pleased to express our support for the vision behind the SL7Expo initiative to establish a National Maritime Education and Exposition Center.

As the leading voice for the global cruise industry, we share the belief that a strong maritime sector — one that honors its history while preparing for the future — benefits everyone who depends on the sea for commerce, security, and connection. The plan to create a dedicated center, anchored by the preservation of a historic SL-7 RO/RO container vessel, offers a unique way to celebrate maritime heritage, inspire future generations, and strengthen public understanding of the industry's vital contributions.

The cruise industry is proud to be part of that story — contributing to the U.S. economy, fostering innovation in maritime technology, and creating quality jobs both at sea and ashore. We see these same priorities reflected in the Expo's focus on education and workforce development, and we appreciate the dedication of those working to bring this vision to life. As a Navy, Merchant Marine, and Coast Guard veteran, as well as a graduate of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, I am proud to support efforts such as this to memorialize and honor that history.

We are glad to recognize the potential value of this initiative in increasing awareness of — and advancing — maritime education, workforce development, and broader public engagement. These efforts are particularly important to sustaining the maritime talent pipeline that is critical for our industry and for the nation.

We look forward to following the progress of the SL7Expo initiative and wish you every success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charles V. Darr". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Bud Darr,
President & CEO