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Subj: SL7 Expo proposal

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To Whom It May Concern:

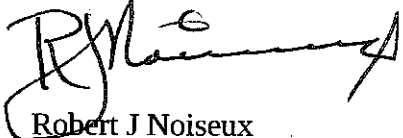
I recently became aware of the SL7 Expo proposal. For so many reasons, I think it is brilliant and a good investment of resources.

The project proponents have raised many good points such as filling a need for maritime training, extending the life of current ships, and economic benefits for allowing citizens to advance economically. They are completely right. Unlike so many other government "investments" the investments associated with this proposal appear poised to yield real and significant returns.

I come at this from a slightly different perspective, though. I am a graduate of the US Merchant Marine Academy. I sailed as an engineer on American merchant vessels, winding up as a licensed Chief Engineer of steam, motor, and gas turbine vessels. I came ashore back in 2001 and entered another critical industry facing the same challenges as the maritime industry; the power industry. I commissioned several new plants and have risen through the ranks over the past 20 plus years and have been managing facilities for almost 15 years. Power generation is a critical sector of our economy which requires skills very similar to operating marine steam plants. Like maritime commerce, our country does not run without ample access to reliable, cost effective power. What I have observed over the years is that capable, experienced workers are very hard to come by. Unlike the maritime industry, which has dedicated academies, power plants have no such centralized training locations with the best plant operators often coming from the Navy or the Merchant Marine. These jobs pay well, are fairly recession proof, and have a path for advancement; even for people without a college education. These jobs are also very difficult to fill. As one example, I had a control room operator position available in 2023. It took me nearly 6 months to fill it. The skills taught by the SL7 Expo project would be poised to ensure a pipeline to this industry, equally critical to our national economic and security health.

There is another benefit to the SL7 Expo project that may not be high on the list, but it is near and dear to my heart. That is providing a training pipeline for museum ships. Over the past year I have learned of the difficulty museum ships are having in training non-mariners to become qualified to operate the fleet of American museum. Ships, like the SS JOHN W BROWN, SS JEREMIAH O'BRIEN, and SS RED OAK VICTORY fall into this area. These ships and their primarily volunteer organizations are great ambassadors between the Merchant Marine and the general public. Opening the SL7 Expo to these ships would greatly expand their volunteer pool. Addressing the need to help these pieces of American history be operated safely and remain viable for the education of future generations is a very special and important gift to our children.

Sincerely Yours,



Robert J Noiseux