



19 March 2004

The Honorable James M. Inhofe
Chairman, Senate Environment and Public Works Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable James M. Jeffords
Ranking Member, Senate Environment and Public Works Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member:

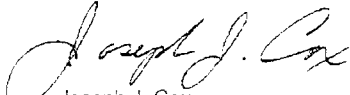
Thank you for holding a hearing on the UN Law of the Sea Treaty. The purpose of this letter is to advise that the Chamber of Shipping of America very strongly supports ratification of the United Nations Law of the Sea Convention (UNCLOS) as it is in the best interests of the United States to do so.

The Chamber of Shipping of America represents 22 American companies that own, operate or charter ships used in the domestic and international trades of the United States. We represent all types of ships including container ships, tankers, ocean-going tug/barges vessels, roll-on roll-off ships and bulk ships. We were founded in 1917 to coordinate U.S. shipowner positions at the initial deliberations leading to the Safety of Life at Sea Convention. Today, we represent our members on safety, environmental and security issues addressed domestically and at the international fora including the International Maritime Organization and the International Labor Organization.

UNCLOS is the codification of the traditional law of the sea and protects, inter alia, our rights of innocent passage and freedom of navigation. We are concerned that our status as a non-ratifying party places us in a dangerous position when the treaty comes open for amendment in October of this year. It is simply in our sovereign interest to ensure that we are at the international negotiating table in the strongest possible position. The U.S. should not ignore the potential for treaty amendments that could have large negative impacts on our interests and we have no vote.

I enclose here a copy of testimony I gave before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on October 21, 2003 wherein I explain some of the potential problem areas where amendments may limit our navigation freedoms. I request that my letter and enclosure be made part of this hearing record. If you or your staff has any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



Joseph J. Cox
President

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