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## **U.S. MARITIME INDUSTRY COMMITTED TO CLEANING UP REMAINING GULF OIL**

WASHINGTON – America’s Jones Act fleet is committed to completing the clean-up of the Gulf oil spill as swiftly and effectively as possible, the Maritime Cabotage Task Force (MCTF) pledged today. While the DeepWater Horizon well has been capped, it is estimated that 1 million barrels of oil from the spill may remain in the Gulf of Mexico.

“Though the oil well in the Gulf has been capped, the need for considerable clean-up effort remains,” said Mark Ruge, counsel to the MCTF. “The U.S. Maritime Industry is committed to completing the task of cleaning the oil and ensuring we preserve the environment and natural resources that are critical to the economy of the Gulf region.”

The American maritime industry responded to the Gulf spill in an “all hands on deck” manner. U.S. vessels involved in the clean-up include scores of the world’s largest and best equipped oil spill response vessels, dozens of technologically advanced offshore supply vessels as well as thousands of fishing boats and other vessels of opportunity.

Claims that the Jones Act, the foundation of U.S. domestic maritime policy since 1920, has hindered the ability of foreign oil skimmers to share in the clean-up effort are false. In fact, the Jones Act does not apply to and does not constrain skimming outside of three miles from shore. The vast majority of skimming has occurred near the well, which is 50 miles from the U.S. coastline. Within the three-mile limit, the federal government has exercised its authority under a separate existing law and implemented an expedited waiver process to allow capable foreign skimmers to clean up oil.

“Broadly waiving the Jones Act for the oil spill is an unnecessary distraction that would do nothing to advance the clean-up effort or improve the region’s economy,” said Eric Smith, Vice President and Chief Commercial Officer, OSG, Inc., and an MCTF Board member. “Foreign oil skimmers are needed and already being utilized under a separate law and waiver process. A broad waiver for foreign vessels would only take work away from those most impacted by the disaster, American workers in the Gulf.”

The Jones Act maritime industry annually generates 500,000 jobs, contributes \$100 billion in total economic output, adds \$46 billion to the value of U.S. economic output, provides \$29 billion in wages, and contributes \$11 billion in taxes.

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*Maritime Cabotage Task Force was founded in 1995 to promote the U.S.-flag fleet engaged in domestic waterborne commerce. With more than 400 members, MCTF is the largest coalition ever assembled to represent the domestic segment of the U.S. Merchant Marine. Nationwide, there are more than 39,000 vessels engaged in Jones Act commerce and they annually move more than 1 billion tons of cargo and 100 million passengers. The Act has been broadly supported by every Congress and Administration since its passage in 1920 and is considered a key element in the nation's defense capabilities. For additional information on the U.S. Maritime Cabotage Task Force, please visit <http://www.mctf.com>.*

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