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October 25, 2021

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

RE: Request for Comments on America's Supply Chains and the
Transportation Industrial Base (DOT-OST-2021-0106)

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

The American Maritime Partnership, representing virtually every element of the U.S. domestic maritime fleet including maritime workers, mariners, vessel operators and shipyards, submits these comments in response to the Department of Transportation's ("DOT") call for information on the current issues affecting our country's supply chain.

We appreciate that there are significant congestion issues across nearly every sector of the ocean supply chain right now. Vessels are stacking outside of the Ports of Los Angeles-Long Beach, containers are building up on dock, warehouses are filled, and there is a current shortage of labor, such as truck drivers, among many other issues. There is rightly an intense amount of attention on these issues, particularly as the holiday season approaches.

However, we wanted to highlight that these problems have largely not affected the domestic maritime industry, showing the resilience of our American system. When the COVID-19 pandemic began, over 500 trans-Pacific sailings were cancelled, or "blanked" by international carriers. On the other hand, few if any domestic voyages have been blanked by any Jones Act carrier during the same time period.

Across the country, including in areas like Alaska, Hawai'i, and Puerto Rico—areas that are dependent on ocean shipping for their basic goods—American carriers have continued to provide an uninterrupted flow of goods in our domestic (Jones Act) markets. They have done so without the huge spikes in freight rates and service challenges that our import markets are experiencing and that are filling the front pages of newspapers across the country right now. While dozens of foreign vessels wait at anchor off the coast with delayed cargo, American carriers serving our markets, because of their own substantial capital investments in purpose-built vessels, equipment and terminals, continue to deliver cargo on reliable sailing schedules.

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The ability to continue this uninterrupted service during a crisis is due in part to the Jones Act, the fundamental law of the maritime industry. The Jones Act provides that vessels transporting cargo between two domestic U.S. points must be American-crewed, built, flagged and owned, thus providing a stable, reliable platform for an industry important to our national, homeland, and economic security. This law ensures that American workers in American shipyards build vessels that are manned by American mariners in U.S. waters, helping maintain a resilient supply chain for the country. The domestic maritime industry provides for more than 650,000 family wage jobs across America and contributes more than \$150 billion in economic impact every year.

The domestic maritime industry will continue providing steady, reliable service for the country, including the non-contiguous areas of the United States, throughout this pandemic. We appreciate the opportunity to provide these comments and would welcome the chance to discuss these comments further at your convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael Roberts", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Michael Roberts
President, American Maritime Partnership

cc: Michael Shapiro, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Economic Policy, U.S. Department of Transportation