

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 11, 2019

The Honorable Kirstjen M. Nielsen
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Nielsen:

We understand that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has been asked to consider waiving the Jones Act for a period of ten years to allow LNG shipments to move on foreign-owned and crewed ships between U.S. seaports. As members who represent Florida, we are very concerned this extreme action would not only devastate Florida's maritime and LNG industry, but would compromise our nation's ability to respond in time of natural disaster or military contingency because the waiver would undermine the very foundation of the law itself. Additionally, it has not been confirmed that Puerto Rico would even benefit from such a waiver.

As you know, the Jones Act requires maritime transportation between two American ports to be reserved to vessels built, owned, and flagged in the United States, and manned by American workers. This pillar of American maritime policy is to credit for successfully protecting our maritime economy and our national security for more than a century. Any consideration to limit its scope must be taken very seriously.

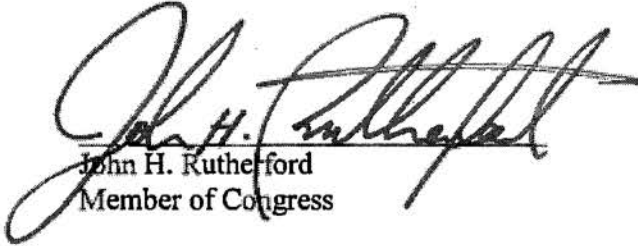
Florida is among the world's leaders in deploying clean LNG for transportation uses. As of January 2019, ninety percent of shipping between Jacksonville and Puerto Rico occurs on new LNG-powered ships built by American workers in American shipyards, making this route unique in the world. The LNG is stored and delivered to the vessels by new infrastructure in Jacksonville. The ships are crewed by American officers and crews, most living in Florida or Puerto Rico. These are the same American shipyards and American mariners that were well positioned to be first responders after Hurricane Maria decimated Puerto Rico in 2017, and these are the same mariners and ships we can depend on to respond to future emergencies or military contingencies.

Building and deploying these innovative LNG ships positions Florida to play an important role in the growth of the LNG industry domestically and world-wide. LNG will power many of the cruise ships leaving Florida's ports by 2025. International cargo ships are expected to triple their use of LNG fuel over the next decade, creating another important market. Florida is the natural source of bulk LNG shipments to customers throughout Latin America. The Florida maritime and LNG industry – carriers and mariners, shipbuilders, LNG suppliers and others – is actively engaged in developing these new opportunities. Broadly waiving the Jones Act could have catastrophic effects on this growth and innovation.

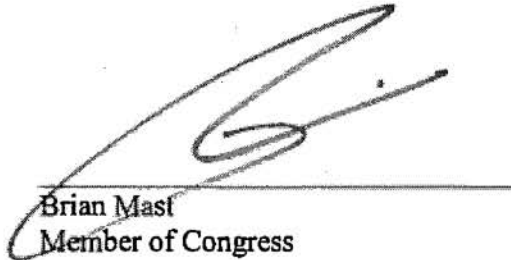
We support Puerto Rico and consider the recovery of the Puerto Rican economy among our highest priorities. We cannot, however, support the requested Jones Act waiver. Such a broad waiver would devastate Florida's domestic maritime and LNG industry.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns.

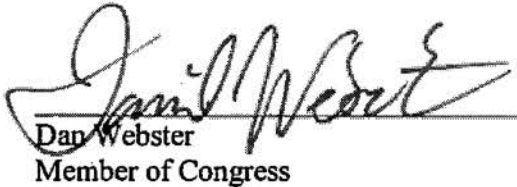
Sincerely,



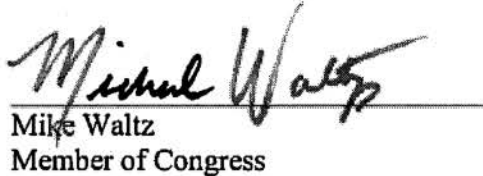
John H. Rutherford
Member of Congress



Brian Mast
Member of Congress



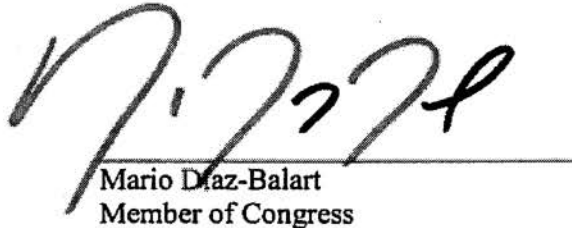
Dan Webster
Member of Congress



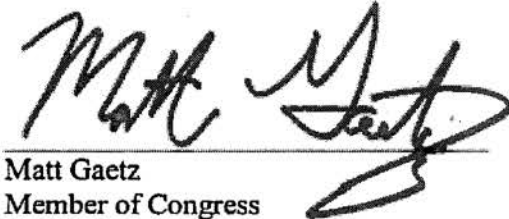
Mike Waltz
Member of Congress



Ted S. Yoho, D.V.M.
Member of Congress



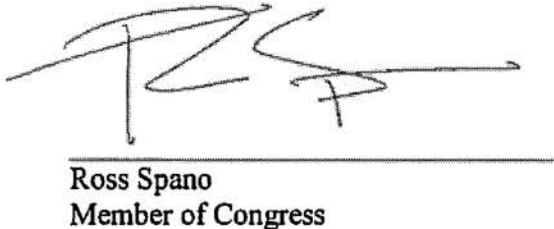
Mario Diaz-Balart
Member of Congress



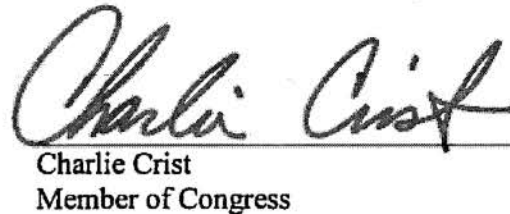
Matt Gaetz
Member of Congress



Al Lawson
Member of Congress



Ross Spano
Member of Congress



Charlie Crist
Member of Congress