**Do not use letterhead if emailed to the Sen. or House member via web site. OK to staff**

Senator or Rep. name July, 2015  
United States Senate/House of Reps Senate or House address Washington, DC 20510  
  
Dear Senator/Rep.,  
  
My name is (insert) and I represent (insert). I am writing to you to seek your support for **S. 1511**, the "Ships to be Recycled in the States" (STORIS) Act, and its companion bill **H.R. 2876**, especially Section 4 (c) (C) to assure a competitive public grants program in support of America’s maritime heritage.

Rep. Garret Graves (R-LA) introduced in the House on June 24 the **STORIS Act** (**H.R. 2876**), the companion to the Senate bill (**S. 1511, STORIS Act**) introduced June 4 by Sen. David Vitter (R-LA). Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-LA) was co-sponsor. It was referred to the Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, assigned to the subcommittee on Surface Transportation and Merchant Marine Infrastructure, Safety and Security, for which you are the Ranking Member.

The House bill was co-sponsored by Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-CA) and Rep. Filemon Vela (D-TX). The bill was referred to the Committee on Commerce and Energy and the House Armed Services Committee. In the last few days, Rep. Robert Brady (D-PA), Gene Green (D-TX), and Charles Boustany (R-LA) have become sponsors. The STORIS Act is supported by members of both parties.   
  
The (my organization) is devoted to (insert your mission). The maritime heritage community is composed of more than 1,000 non-profit organizations in more than 40 states. This includes historic naval ships, maritime museums, tall ships for sail training, lighthouses, maritime historical societies, education, and preservation organizations. Thousands of veterans serve as staff or volunteers.   
  
The STORIS Act is a proposed amendment to Public Law 103-451, the National Maritime Heritage Act of 1994. This act calls for a pool of unappropriated funds equal to 25% of the proceeds from the scrapping of ships in the National Defense Reserve Fleet ("mothball fleet”), to be distributed by the National Park Service to maritime non-profit institutions, and state and local governments through a competitive matching grants program. There is no impact on the budget.

The National Maritime Heritage Act reflected an historic and deep recognition by Congress of the importance of our country's maritime history. On a practical level, the National Maritime Heritage Act also sought to provide assistance to those non-government organizations dedicated to preserving surviving reminders of that past, the ships, the artifacts and the stories that are so vital in telling our unique maritime story to new generations of Americans and so economically important to the cultural tourism sector on which so many communities depend.

An amendment was added to the 2010 National Defense Authorization Act that allowed the Maritime Administration to use all of the funds solely for the preservation of property it owns. This ultimately resulted in reduced funding to maritime heritage institutions across the country in more than 40 states by 50%.

The **STORIS Act (S. 1511 and H.R. 2876**), restores the original formula of 50% for MARAD, 25% to maritime academies, and a full 25% to the National Park Service-administered grants program for maritime preservation and educational projects. The STORIS Act also seeks more transparency in the ship-scrapping process.

I respectfully request that you support the STORIS Act, and encourage you to be a co-sponsor.

Sincerely, please send a copy of your email or letter to: runyant@ecu.edu