

ROBERT E. LATTA  
5TH DISTRICT, OHIO

ASSISTANT MINORITY WHIP

COMMITTEE ON  
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SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMERCE,  
TRADE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-3505**

June 25, 2010

WASHINGTON OFFICE:  
1531 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
(202) 225-6405

DISTRICT OFFICES:  
1045 NORTH MAIN STREET  
SUITE 6  
BOWLING GREEN, OH 43402  
(419) 354-8700

101 CLINTON STREET  
SUITE 1200  
DEFIANCE, OH 43512  
(419) 782-1996

11 EAST MAIN STREET  
NORWALK, OH 44857  
(419) 668-0206

The Honorable Barack Obama  
President  
United States of America  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500-0005

Dear President Obama,

I am writing with regards to the continued cleanup effort in the Gulf in the wake of the BP Deepwater Horizon oil disaster. It has been over two months since the Deepwater Horizon rig exploded on April 20<sup>th</sup>. Each day oil and natural gas continue to flow at an uncontrollable rate, and it has devastated businesses and economic growth along the coastlines in the Gulf. The spill impacts not only oil production but also the livelihood of the fisherman, tourism, wildlife, and businesses tied to the Gulf. While the relief wells are being drilled and nearing completion, we must use all available resources to reduce the economic and environmental effect of this disaster.

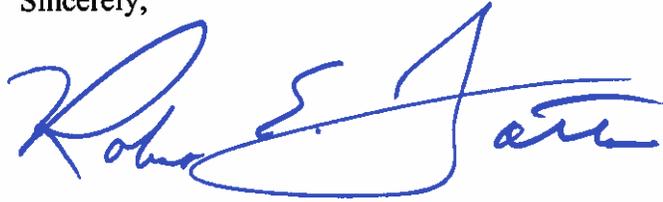
The Merchant Marine Act of 1920 regulates maritime commerce in the U.S. waters and between U.S. ports. Section 27, the Jones Act, requires all goods transported by water between U.S. ports be carried in U.S. flag ships, constructed in the United States, owned by U.S. citizens, and crewed by U.S. citizens and U.S. permanent residents. This law is intended to support the U.S. merchant marine industry, and while I support the premise of the Jones Act, I think in a time of a national crisis such as the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, the Jones Act should be waived. During Hurricane Katrina, President Bush in conjunction with Department of Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff, temporarily waived the Jones Act for foreign vessels to move in U.S. waters and between ports from September 1 to September 19, 2005 because of the disruption in the production and transportation of petroleum and refined petroleum products in the region, and the impact it had on our national security.

With this in mind, I respectfully ask that as President of the United States you work with Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano, and National Incident Commander Admiral Thad Allen, to issue a Jones Act waiver. It is my understanding that, to date, no waivers of the Jones Act, or similar federal laws, have been required because none of the foreign vessels currently operating as part of the Deepwater Horizon response have been engaged in or required such a waiver. I understand that requests for Jones Act waivers can be requested pursuant to 46 U.S.C. Section 501 and reviewed for consideration by Customs and

Border Protection under consultation by United States Maritime Administration on a case-by-case basis.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and I look forward to hearing your timely response. The tragedy in the Gulf is one that will never be forgotten and the people who are responsible for this should be held fully accountable. The United States needs to use every available resource at our disposal, domestically or foreign, in assisting in this matter. I look forward to continuing to work with all responsible parties involved in the Deepwater Horizon oil spill through my role as a member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

Sincerely,



Robert E. Latta  
Member of Congress

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Cc: Admiral Thad Allen, National Incident Commander, United States Coast Guard  
The Honorable Janet Napolitano, Secretary, Department of Homeland Security