



August 2, 2024

The Honorable Maria Cantwell, Chair
The Honorable Ted Cruz, Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
425 Hart Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Cantwell and Ranking Member Cruz,

The National Association of Maritime Organizations (NAMO), as advocates for deep draft ocean-going ships, shippers, tug and barge operators, ports, and related maritime interests across the US, writes to express our serious concerns about Sec. 354 of H.R. 7659, the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2024. We press that this section, which seeks to prohibit the study for additional anchorages on the Hudson River, poses significant safety risks and negative economic impacts not only for the Hudson River but also for other vital waterways across the United States.

NAMO consists of steamship associations and maritime exchanges that focus its attention on operational issues affecting the viability of the deep-draft ocean-going shipping (steamship) industry. NAMO's mission is to improve the climate for international shipping in the United States. NAMO was created to focus federal government attention on the needs of the steamship agents, owners and operators, and others engaged in ocean shipping.

In their report, *Establishing Anchorage Grounds on the Hudson River, Report to Congress* dated February 28, 2023, mandated by Congress under the Elijah E. Cummings Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2020, the US Coast Guard notes that "current anchorage capacity along the Hudson River north of Tarrytown, NY is inadequate." The report, prepared with input from local maritime industry stakeholders, found no evidence of collisions or maritime incidents due to commercial anchoring in the study area. This finding underscores the critical role of anchorages in maintaining safe navigation under challenging conditions such as inclement weather, ice, high traffic volumes, or when crews need rest.

The proposal to prohibit the study for additional anchorages in Section 354 overlooks the essential role they play in maintaining safety and efficiency within our supply chain. Anchorages are fundamental to supporting coastwise and international trade and the seamless movement of US goods. By providing a buffer against unpredictable weather and adverse conditions, they allow vessels to safely wait for loading or seek refuge. This contributes significantly to operational efficiency and safety, while also aiding the efforts of the nation's maritime industry as a whole, including US Coast Guard (USCG) and US Customs and Border Protection (CBP).



Moreover, safe anchorages are critical for the stability of our economy at local, regional, and national levels. They prevent potential infrastructure problems from escalating into safety hazards and ensure the uninterrupted flow of maritime traffic, particularly under challenging conditions. Without sufficient anchorages, we risk congestion, higher emissions, and increased danger during vessel movements, all of which undermine the effective transport of goods crucial to our national trade. The movement of goods on our nation's waterways, including by barge on the Hudson River, is the safest, most energy-efficient, and environmentally friendly form of commercial transportation available in the U.S.

Furthermore, the enactment of Sec. 354 could set a dangerous precedent, leading to similar restrictions on other important waterways. This would adversely impact the maritime industry, affecting everything from safety and operational efficiency to the economic advantages provided by reliable maritime transport. Licensed pilots operating on waterways like the Hudson River adhere to stringent Coast Guard regulations, ensuring the highest standards of safety and professionalism. The ban on anchorages proposed by Sec. 354 would undermine these practices, placing vessels and their crews, both foreign and domestic, at unnecessary risk.

We strongly urge you to oppose Sec. 354 of H.R. 7659 to preserve and enhance the safety and efficiency of navigation on all U.S. waterways.

Sincerely,

Kate Mickelson, President
National Association of Maritime Organizations

NAMO Membership

Association of Ship Brokers and Agents
Big River Coalition
Columbia River Steamship Operators' Association
Maritime Exchange for the Delaware River and Bay
Maritime Association Port of NY/NJ
Louisiana Maritime Association
Virginia Maritime Association
US Great Lakes Shipping Association
West Gulf Maritime Association
International Propeller Club