November 14, 2018

To: Members of the U.S. Senate  
Senate staff assigned to steel and/or transportation issues

SUPPORT THE BIPARTISAN VESSEL INCIDENTAL DISCHARGE ACT (VIDA)  
TITLE IX OF S. 140, THE FRANK LOBIONDO  
COAST GUARD AUTHORIZATION ACT

Background: American steel producers rely heavily on an efficient water transportation network to deliver iron ore, scrap and other raw materials necessary for steelmaking. In particular, shipping across the Great Lakes provides the essential link in supplying iron ore from Minnesota and Michigan mines to steel plants in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky and Pennsylvania.

Currently, the regulation of ballast water treatment and other vessel discharges is governed by two separate federal agencies with differing statutory authorities, as well as the requirements of 25 different states. This has resulted in a patchwork of federal and state regulations that make compliance confusing, costly, and sometimes unfeasible, and limits the competitiveness of domestic steel producers who rely on water transportation of their raw materials.

Situation: Title IX of S. 140, the Frank LoBiondo Coast Guard Authorization Act, contains the bipartisan Vessel Incidental Discharge Act (VIDA), which would establish a single national standard for the treatment of ballast water and other vessel discharges. The bipartisan compromise VIDA language included in S. 140 is the result of extensive negotiations among Senators from the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation and the Committee on Environment and Public Works, as well as other interested Senators representing the Great Lakes region.

The VIDA legislation would replace the patchwork of federal and state regulations with uniform national standards for the regulation of ballast water and other discharges incidental to normal vessel operations. The bill will remove the inefficiencies, duplication and uncertainty that disrupt the logistical operations of steel producers, and streamline regulations based on environmentally sound science to create a more reliable water-borne transportation network.

Request: Please support final passage of S. 140, the Frank LoBiondo Coast Guard Authorization Act, when it is considered on the Senate floor this week. Doing so will enable the passage of VIDA, legislation that will enhance the competitiveness of the American steel industry.
domestic steel industry by providing a single national standard for the treatment of ballast water and other vessel discharges.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Gibson
President and CEO