



**American  
Iron and Steel  
Institute**

**Steelgram**

**Immediate Attention Requested**

**April 17, 2018**

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

**Support Title VIII of S. 1129, the Coast Guard Authorization Act  
The Bipartisan Vessel Incidental Discharge Act (VIDA)**

**Background:** AISI is comprised of 21 member companies, including integrated and electric furnace steelmakers, and approximately 120 associate members who are suppliers to or customers of the steel industry. American steel producers rely heavily on an efficient water transportation network to deliver scrap and 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 and other vessel discharges is governed under two federal agencies with differing statutory authorities, as well as 25 different state requirements for the same discharges. 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.

**Situation:** Title VIII of S.1129, the 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. VIDA, which passed the Senate Commerce Committee last year, 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:** Support the motion to proceed, cloture, and final passage of S.1129, the 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 domestic steel industry by providing a single national standard for the treatment of ballast water and other vessel discharges.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas J. Gibson".

Thomas J. Gibson  
President and CEO  
American Iron and Steel Institute