



June 16, 2016

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid
Senate Democratic Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House of Representatives
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John McCain
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services
U.S. Senate
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mac Thornberry
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services
U.S. House of Representatives
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member, Committee on Armed Services
U.S. House of Representatives
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member, Committee on Armed Services
U.S. House of Representatives
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: Vessel Incidental Discharge Act (VIDA) Concerns

Dear Congressional and Armed Services Committee Leaders:

The undersigned state organizations write to express concern with the Vessel Incidental Discharge Act (VIDA). Our members are charged with protecting water quality, flora and fauna, and ensuring ecosystem integrity under federal and state laws. VIDA raises significant federalism issues and as such, this legislation should be developed in partnership with states. You have received detailed letters raising a variety of views from many of our member states, and from other organizations to which our states belong. This letter does not supersede or alter the views or input of any state and should not be viewed as representing the perspective of any individual state.

VIDA preempts state authorities to protect state waters from harmful invasive species and water pollution discharged from vessels. As such, VIDA will have adverse consequences on water quality, sources of drinking water, and sensitive aquatic resources.

VIDA would exempt more than 21 million vessels from the existing body of federal and state invasive species and water pollution laws that apply to 31 categories of incidental discharges, most of which predate the U.S.

Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) 2008 and 2013 Vessel General Permits. As such, VIDA will allow toxic metals, invasive species, greywater, and other chemical pollutants to be discharged without control from vessels into our nation's waters.

Our organizations recognize the importance and national economic contributions of the shipping industry, and the need to ensure streamlined, clear, and effective regulations. We are very interested in participating in discussions with all stakeholders and you on legislation that will improve the current federal regulatory regimes separately overseen by the Coast Guard and EPA for ballast water and other incidental vessel discharges but also respect state's rights and roles to advance clean and safe water around the nation.

We look forward to engaging with you on this important matter.

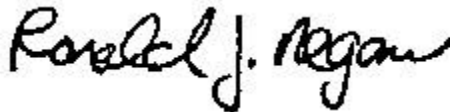
Sincerely,



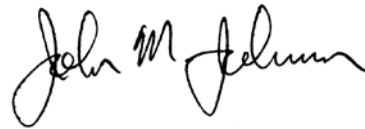
Julia Anastasio
Executive Director & General Counsel
Association of Clean Water Administrators



Alexandra Dapolito Dunn
Executive Director & General Counsel
Environmental Council of the States



Ronald Regan
Executive Director
Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies



John Johnson
Deputy Executive Director
National Association of State Boating Law
Administrators



Jeanne Christie
Executive Director
Association of State Wetland Managers

CC: The Honorable John Thune, Chairman, U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, & Transportation
The Honorable Bill Nelson, Ranking Member, U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, & Transportation
The Honorable James Inhofe, Chairman, U.S. Senate Committee on Environment & Public Works
The Honorable Barbara Boxer, Ranking Member, U.S. Senate Committee on Environment & Public Works
The Honorable Bill Shuster, Chairman, U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
The Honorable Peter DeFazio, Ranking Member, U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
The Honorable Gina McCarthy, Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
The Honorable Admiral Paul F. Zukunft, Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard