



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.

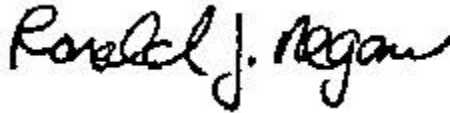
Sincerely,



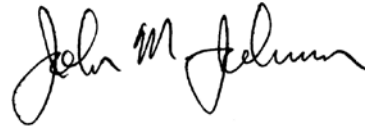
Julia Anastasio  
Executive Director & General Counsel  
Association of Clean Water Administrators



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