

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 16, 2024

The Honorable Joe Biden
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

We were pleased to learn of the announcement of the Icebreaker Collaboration Effort (ICE) Pact between the United States, Canada, and our new NATO ally, Finland following the Washington NATO Summit. The ICE Pact seeks to update the United States' existing fleet of polar icebreakers at a time that the Arctic is becoming increasingly important for ocean shipping routes and our national security. It is our hope that as the administration develops plans for the ICE Pact, you strongly consider building icebreakers for the Great Lakes, including a domestic heavy Great Lakes icebreaker (GLIB) and replacements for the more than 40-year-old smaller icebreaking tugs that are critical to keeping the North American supply chain moving during the winter months.

Modeled after the Australia-United Kingdom-United States (AUKUS) submarine pact, the ICE Pact aims to unite three Arctic nations to bolster our icebreaker building capabilities. Finland brings an impressive level of expertise and experience in building icebreakers, as the country builds 60 percent of the world's icebreakers.¹ Their capabilities will undoubtedly contribute to and improve both the United States' and Canada's icebreaker building capacity and capabilities. The U.S. Coast Guard has previously utilized Finnish icebreaking expertise to train officers in ice navigation and consulted Finnish experts on icebreaking design technology and production methods to transfer to U.S. shipyards.

We strongly urge the United States to prioritize the Great Lakes region within the ICE Pact framework. Today, 28 percent of our nation's GDP is generated in the Great Lakes region, including the bulk of U.S. steel manufacturing. Factoring in the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway, the region accounts for \$36 billion in economic activity.² Much of this trade is negatively impacted during the winter months. According to an analysis by the Lake Carriers Association, inadequate icebreaking on the Great Lakes has led to a loss of \$2 billion in economic activity and the loss of over 10,000 jobs over the last 10 years.

Following the release of the Department of Defense's assessment of the Arctic, it is clear that cooperation between China and Russia to expand their capacity in the Arctic poses serious concerns to the national security interests of the United States and of our NATO allies.³ Great Lakes commerce is vital to ensuring the shipbuilding industry's access to iron ore and steel manufacturing.

¹ <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/360deg-view-americas-ice-pact-polar-icebreaker-partnership-canada-and-finland#:~:text=The%20recently%20announced%20icebreaker%20collaboration,closer%20cooperation%20on%20polar%20icebreakers.>

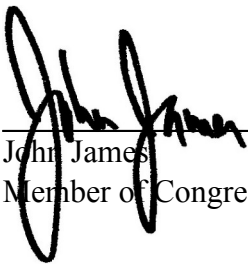
² https://lcaships.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/EconomicStudy-GreatLakes-StLawrenceRegion_EN_July_19_2023.pdf

³ <https://media.defense.gov/2024/Jul/22/2003507411/-1/-1/0/DOD-ARCTIC-STRATEGY-2024.PDF>

Additionally, as stated in your administration's National Strategy for the Arctic Region, we must expand the U.S. Coast Guard icebreaker fleet to support an enhanced presence in the U.S and European Arctic regions to support "effective maritime security, law enforcement, search and rescue, and emergency response."

We anticipate that the ICE Pact will present a significant opportunity to expand our icebreaker building capacity. As your administration further develops details of the agreement, we urge you to prioritize modernizing the Great Lakes icebreaker fleet. We welcome the opportunity to hear from your administration about how Congress can best facilitate the implementation of the ICE Pact and how the Great Lakes region can best fit into this framework.

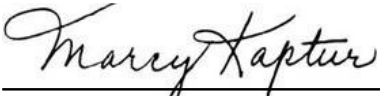
Sincerely,



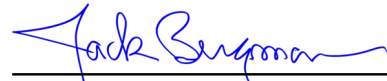
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Member of Congress



Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



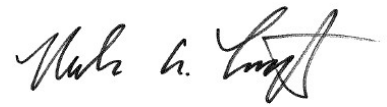
Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress



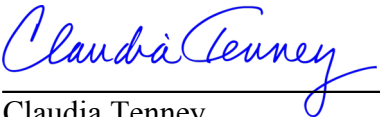
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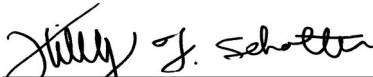
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Member of Congress



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