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September 15, 2015

The Honorable David Vitter
516 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Vitter:

Thank you for your support of the Maritime and Energy Workforce Technical Training Enhancement Act as it was introduced in the House of Representatives.

In April 2015, the Louisiana Maritime Task Force, a collaborative effort of the Louisiana Association of Business and Industry (LABI) and the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS), published a Maritime Workforce Study entitled *An Invisible Giant: The Maritime Industry in Louisiana*. The study estimated that 20 percent of all jobs in Louisiana are maritime industry-related, and that the maritime industry produces \$11 billion in overall economic impact and more than \$3.5 billion in income for Louisiana families annually. The study also notes that Louisiana's oil and gas and maritime industries are inter-dependent.

While the maritime workforce has proven to be strong and resilient, there is a need to upgrade the skills and capacity of workers to ensure the future viability of the industry in Louisiana and other coastal states. Jobs in the maritime industry, with a wide range of scope, continue to boom with international activity at America's ports. These jobs include operating and maintaining vessels, as well as staffing numerous positions at port facilities. Education and training requirements vary depending on the type of job. Bachelor's degrees are required for marine officers and engineers, but qualification for most maritime employment positions can be obtained through associate degrees.

The LABI-LCTCS Maritime Workforce Study found that Delgado Community College has the most robust maritime training program of LCTCS colleges. In 2014, 5,416 students completed courses at the Maritime, Fire, Radar, and Industrial Training Facility at Delgado. As greater numbers of trained workers are needed for maritime jobs – many of them related to the surge in U.S. energy production and distribution – Delgado is prepared to expand its maritime and energy industry training capacity.

The Maritime and Energy Workforce Technical Training Enhancement Act would authorize creation of a new program to support capacity building to address the critical need for trained workers in the maritime and energy industries. This would include awarding competitive grants, and creation of a "centers of excellence" program in maritime and energy workforce training. Our college would benefit greatly from capacity-building assistance authorized under this legislation.

Again, thank you for your support.

Sincerely,



Joan Y. Davis
Chancellor