

RESOLUTION 17: REVITALIZING DOMESTIC SHIPBUILDING, SHIP REPAIR, AND MARITIME INDUSTRIES

Whereas AFL-CIO affiliates represent tens of thousands of highly skilled union members in the shipbuilding, ship repair and maritime industries. With our members building and repairing commercial vessels, naval ships, and producing vital vessel inputs like steel, engines, boilers, propulsion systems, glass, cables, pipes, fittings, pumps and other machinery, and a wide array of other materials and components used on commercial and military vessels.

Whereas strong domestic shipbuilding, ship repair, and maritime industries are necessary to ensure U.S. economic and national security, maintain secure access to global trading partners, and preserve the ability to effectively transport goods and materials across the world in times of peace, conflict, or global emergency.

Whereas for decades the People's Republic of China has systematically targeted the global shipbuilding and maritime sectors for dominance and have employed aggressive and predatory tactics to singlehandedly control the industry, ranging from extensive state subsidies for its domestic industry to restricting and displacing non-Chinese shipbuilders.

Whereas a combination of China's predatory trade practices and the lack of appropriate investment in our domestic shipbuilding industry have forced U.S. shipbuilders, their suppliers, and workers to compete on an uneven playing field and have resulted in the rapid decline of the U.S. shipbuilding industry.

Whereas after decades of decline in U.S. shipbuilding capacity, the U.S. Navy estimates China's shipbuilding capacity at roughly 232 times that of the United States. As a result, China has become the world's largest shipbuilder, producing more than 1,000 commercial ocean-going vessels per year while U.S. commercial yards build only a handful.

Whereas in response to a union-filed 301 petition urging an investigation into China's discriminatory trade practices in the shipbuilding and maritime industries, USTR issued a 2024 report concluding that China engages in non-market economy practices to dominate the maritime, logistics, and shipbuilding sectors and that China's behavior is unreasonable and actionable given the destructive effect and challenges they pose to U.S. interests.

Whereas revitalizing the domestic shipbuilding, ship repair and maritime industries will require action against China's illegal industry trade practices, robust investment by the U.S. government, and consistently strong demand signals to stoke sustained industry investment in domestic capacity.

Be it resolved that:

1. The AFL-CIO will work with lawmakers, the White House, industry, and other stakeholders in a concerted effort to revitalize domestic commercial and defense shipbuilding, strengthen the shipbuilding industrial base, and redouble efforts to train and support the workforce on which the industry relies.

2. The AFL-CIO will fight against China's predatory industry trade practices by supporting swift implementation of the trade remedies proposed by USTR as a result of their 301 investigation into China's illegal practices in the shipbuilding, maritime and logistics industries.
3. The AFL-CIO will actively support passage of legislation, such as the SHIPS for America Act, and support robust funding for commercial and defense shipbuilding to help reinvigorate this vitally important strategic industry.
4. The AFL-CIO will actively oppose any legislation or proposals to move domestic shipbuilding or ship repair work to be completed overseas. These shortsighted proposals are bad for U.S. workers and severely compromise our economic and national security.
5. The AFL-CIO will amplify the message of the existential importance of revitalizing the domestic shipbuilding, ship repair, and maritime industries to all affiliates' members, workers, lawmakers, partners, and other stakeholders.
6. The AFL-CIO reaffirms its strong support for the Jones Act.

[SUBMITTED BY IAM]