

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 11, 2026

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write in advance of your planned meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping to underscore the importance of this moment in our shared goal of revitalizing domestic shipbuilding and the broader American maritime industry. The United States is at an inflection point and cannot cede additional ground to the People's Republic of China (PRC). The PRC's decades-long effort to decimate American shipbuilding as part of their effort to position themselves as the dominant global shipbuilding power affords them no grace or opportunity for compromise. We urge you to stand strong during these negotiations as we work together to enact trade remedies and advance the SHIPS for America Act to level the playing field and create a strong commercial and military shipbuilding ecosystem in the United States. We urge you to prioritize America's maritime industry and its workers during this summit, and we stand ready to support these goals through legislation.

In your conversations with Chinese President Xi Jinping, we encourage you to keep in mind the significant lack of fairness at play and action needed to level the playing field and deliver for American workers and American shipyards. Over the last twenty years, the PRC has successfully executed a comprehensive strategy to significantly diminish the shipbuilding industry in the United States and become the dominant shipbuilding force globally. In 2025, China once again dominated the world's commercial shipbuilding orders, with more than 60 percent of all orders going to China, 16 percent to South Korea, and 9 percent to Japan. In contrast, the United States produced fewer ships than China, South Korea, Japan, Vietnam, the Philippines, Taiwan, Italy, and Germany. This drastic difference in capacity is a result of the PRC's anti-competitive practices to gain an advantage in shipbuilding through unfair and discriminatory tactics, such as government subsidies and favorable loans from PRC-operated banks. According to USTR's Section 301 Investigation's findings, the non-market excess capacity in China's steel sector significantly contributes to the price competitiveness of PRC-made vessels, and there are instances where Chinese steel intended for vessels in Chinese shipyards has been sold at a lower rate than Chinese steel intended for market economies. The PRC's aggressive actions to target the United States' shipbuilding, maritime and logistics sectors warrant the use of our trade laws

to their fullest extent, including imposing trade remedies to counter these efforts and allow for fair competition on the global stage.

The actions that your Administration has taken to combat China's cheating, including announced fees for Chinese ships that dock at U.S. ports and the extra charges for companies using ships built in China, were prudent and have the opportunity to be successful. From March to May 2025, following USTR's February determination that China had employed non-market practices, Chinese shipyard orders fell by approximately 25%. Orders of Chinese ships rebounded later in the year due to market conditions and the fees being postponed. This demonstrated that these fees are structured to strategically shift future orders away from China and change the behaviors of the global maritime industry. The sudden decrease in Chinese shipping orders shows that when your Administration acts on this issue, the global maritime industry pays attention. The revenue generated from these fees will go towards rebuilding our own maritime industry, as stated in your Administration's Maritime Action Plan. Ensuring these strong measures take effect will be a critical step towards promoting our domestic industrial base, growing America's economy, creating good-paying jobs in these important sectors, and protecting our national security.

Many of our states are home to companies and a workforce that specializes in shipbuilding and repair for both military and commercial vessels, as well as suppliers of important inputs to build ships. Standing strong on shipbuilding trade remedies, passing the SHIPS Act, and continuing to revitalize the domestic industry through the FY27 Appropriations process will create economic benefit throughout our communities and beyond. These U.S. shipyards and their suppliers are major employers that provide a pathway to the middle class through good-paying and often union jobs and keep the knowledge and skill to build vessels used for military purposes and to carry goods around the world made in America. We must hold China accountable and reverse the loss felt over the last two decades to stand up for the hardworking Americans employed in the shipbuilding industry, those who serve in the military branches that need these vessels, and who live in communities supported by these jobs.

As we strive to grow the American economy, compete with the PRC, and ensure the American military has the resources necessary to succeed, we encourage your Administration to execute the targeted actions that began to reshape existing global shipbuilding trends and revitalize our domestic maritime industry. We stand ready to work together to support this goal.

Sincerely,



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Todd Young
United States Senator



Mark Kelly
United States Senator



Tim Scott
United States Senator