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| **Maritime Legislation** |
| **Source:** MLA**Date:** October 1, 1999**Committee:** [OFFSHORE INDUSTRIES](http://www.mlaus.org/committee-profile.ihtml?id=200) **FORMAL REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON****MARITIME LEGISLATION**The Committee continues to monitor legislative developments touching on maritime affairs, and to disseminate information about these developments to the other Committees of the Association. Currently pending in the 106th Congress are a number of bills of interest to the maritime community, including a number of bills relating to the American cruise ship industry. The "U.S. Cruise Ship Tourism Development Act of 1999," S. 1510, would allow foreign cruise ships to be reflagged under the U.S. flag, with a stipulation that a future ship would be built in a U.S. yard. The "U.S. Cruise Tourism Act," H.R. 248, would also allow certain foreign-flag cruise ships to operate between U.S. ports, and the "All American Cruise Act of 1999," H.R. 3392, would allow foreign built cruise ships to be brought into the coastwise trade upon the owner entering into a contract for the construction of at least two cruise ships of equal or greater size in the United States. This bill would also create tax incentives for U.S. companies operating or building cruise ships in the United States.Another bill, H.R. 316, would strengthen the hand of state authorities to prohibit "cruises to nowhere." Under the Johnson Act of 1992, offshore gambling on vessels in international waters is legal unless a state passes a law specifically prohibiting the activity. This bill would reverse the situation, and permit states to use state laws that prohibit land-based casino gaming to prohibit gambling aboard "cruises to nowhere."The interests of U.S. shippers in increased competition and the interests of the U.S. maritime industry were highlighted in other bills of more general application. The "Freedom to Transport Act," S. 1032, would modify the Jones Act to allow certain foreign-built vessels to participate in the coastwise trade, and the "United States-Flag Merchant Marine Revitalization Act of 1999," H.R. 2159, would provide various financial and tax incentives to increase the competitiveness of the U.S. merchant marine.There were also bills introduced to benefit U.S. merchant seamen. S. 893 and H.R. 3162 would both provide tax benefits to merchant seamen, and the "Protection of Seamen Against Economic Reprisal Act of 1999," H.R. 714, would protect seamen against economic reprisal.Finally, the "Coastal Protection and Vessel Control Improvement Act" would require vessels to notify the Coast Guard when entering U.S. waters, and allow the Coast Guard to bar entry when safety concerns exist.All of these bills have been referred to committee. The Maritime Legislation Committee will continue to monitor these bills as well as other legislative developments, and to give consideration to any legislative initiatives that might be appropriate for the Association to consider.Respectfully submitted,Harold K. Watson, Chair |