

**The Council of American Master Mariners, Inc.**

30623 Chihuahua Valley Road; Warner Springs, CA 92086-9220  
Phone: 951-767-3037 FAX: 951-767-3048; Mobile: 310-292-4185

June 1, 2017

The Honorable John Thune  
Chairman  
Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation  
511 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Thune:

I represent the Council of American Master Mariners, Inc (CAMM) -- a non-profit organization established in 1936 which represents licensed Master Mariners, licensed Deck Officers, and Maritime Professionals working ashore in the Maritime Industry and the waterfront business communities. Our CAMM membership and other constituents are concerned about the impact of GPS jamming and spoofing of marine systems. Port facilities have been disabled by small jamming devices carried by trucks. A professor at the University of Texas has demonstrated how easy it is to commandeer a vessel at sea with a GPS "spoofing" device. He has even published a paper entitled "*Hostile Control of Ships Via False GPS Signals.*" And it may well be that U.S. Naval vessels were "spoofed" into Iranian waters last year on the same day as the President's State of the Union address.

We strongly urge you to support the provisions in HR 2518 (the House proposal for the 2018/2019 Coast Guard Authorization Act), requiring the Secretary of Transportation to work through the U.S. Coast Guard and establish an eLoran complementary and backup capability for the Global Position System (GPS). We also ask your support for a Department of Transportation appropriation to fund this effort.

A federal service contract for a new eLoran service could cost less than \$50 million a year. It will help protect our nation's transportation systems and other critical infrastructure, along with our \$1B per year investment in GPS. Also, if the contract is structured properly, the government's share of revenue from the contractor's sale of value-added services could well exceed its costs.

GPS signals are essential for every networked technology, including telecommunications, banking/finance, electrical power, and digital broadcast. Yet they are under increasing threat from domestic jamming, solar activity, and accidental interference. Recently, the Director of National Intelligence reported that Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea are focusing on improving their already impressive capabilities to jam our satellites. This is the latest in a long series of warnings over four administrations about threats to GPS and our over reliance on the system.

The Department of Transportation has said that GPS is essential for current transportation and for improving systems going forward. The Department of Homeland Security has called GPS "a single point of failure for critical infrastructure." Both departments have announced that a relatively inexpensive, terrestrial, and wireless Enhanced Loran (eLoran) system is the best option to complement and backup GPS.

The Bush and Obama administrations both recognized the danger of America's growing reliance on GPS. Both decided that a complementary and backup system was needed, and both decided upon eLoran. In 2008, DHS announced that it would build such a system. In 2015, the Deputy Secretaries of Defense and Transportation wrote to Chairman Schuster in the House that they would build it. Yet, despite many low and no-cost-to-the-government options available, nothing has been done. In the face of such prolonged gridlock in DC, Congress must act to protect America NOW!

A non-profit NGO that we support, the *Resilient Navigation and Timing Foundation*, has provided Senate staff drafting assistance for both authorization and appropriation efforts in Congress. We support their efforts and would be happy to meet with you or your staff to further discuss these issues.

Thank you for your help on this important national issue.

Sincerely,



Capt. Jeff Cowan  
National President



## National Officers

### National President

Capt. Jeff Cowan  
captcowan@mastermariner.org

### Immediate Past President

Capt. Richard J. Klein  
captklein@mastermariner.org

### 1st Vice President

Capt. Joe Hartnett  
caphartnett@mastermariner.org

### 2nd vice President

Capt. Pat Moloney  
captmoloney@mastermariner.org

### Secretary/Treasurer

Capt. M.H.K. Aschemeyer  
captmanny@mastermariner.org

## Regional VPs

### North Atlantic

Capt. Frank Zabrocky  
captzabrockyl@mastermariner.org

### South Atlantic

Capt. Elizabeth Clark  
captclark@mastermariner.org

### Gulf

Capt. Mike McCright  
captmccright@mastermariner.org

### South Pacific

Capt. Klaus Niemi  
captniemi@mastermariner.org

### North Pacific

Capt. Cal Hunziker  
caphunzinker@mastermariner.org

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Capt. Elizabeth Clark  
captmm@bellsouth.net

### Positions Committee Chair

Capt. Frank Zabrocky  
captzabrockyl@mastermariner.org

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Capt. R.J. Klein  
sidelights@mastermariner.org

### Constitution & By-Laws Chair

Capt. Pat Moloney  
mmrpat@earthlink.net

### IFSMA Representative

Capt. Cal Hunziker