

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

February 13, 2018

The Honorable Elaine Chao  
Secretary of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Madam Secretary:

We write today to respectfully request your consideration of Tidewater Community College (TCC) as a designated Domestic Maritime Center of Excellence pursuant to the Domestic Maritime Centers of Excellence Act, signed into law as part of the FY 2018 National Defense Authorization Act.

Serving the 5<sup>th</sup> largest port in North America and the largest Naval Base in the world, TCC has a longstanding history of meeting the maritime workforce needs in the Hampton Roads region. TCC offers Maritime and Logistics programs in Inside Machinist, Maritime Logistics, Maritime Technologies, Maritime Welding, Marine Electrical, Marine Mechanical, Pipefitter, and Truck Driving.

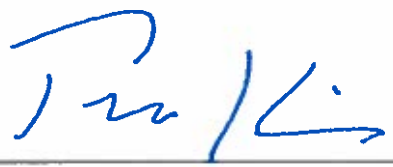
Tidewater Community College is also home to the Southeast Maritime and Transportation (SMART) Center. The SMART Center is the only National Science Foundation Advanced Technology Education (NSF ATE) center in the U.S. solely focused on developing a pipeline of credentialed skilled technicians in the maritime and transportation industry. The college enrolls 2500 registered apprentices and students each year in Maritime programs in collaboration with several local, regional and national business and industry partners including, for example, AMSEC, BAE Systems, Newport News Shipbuilding, Norfolk Naval Shipyard, Oceaneering, Seaward Marine Corporation, Tecnico Corporation, and the Virginia Ship Repair Association.

For these reasons, we request you give full and fair consideration to designate Tidewater Community College a Domestic Maritime Center of Excellence, as we believe it is uniquely capable of helping secure our nation's talent pipeline for the domestic maritime industry.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

  
Robert J. Wittman  
Member of Congress

  
Tim Kaine  
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner  
United States Senator



A. Donald McEachin  
Member of Congress



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott  
Member of Congress



Scott Taylor  
Member of Congress

cc: RADM Mark H. Buzby, Maritime Administrator