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March 2, 2022

Senator Maria Cantwell
Chair
Senate Commerce Committee
254 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Roger Wicker
Ranking Member
Senate Commerce Committee
555 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Cantwell and Ranking Member Wicker:

Thank you for your ongoing leadership as Congress continues to identify mechanisms to alleviate persisting supply chain challenges. As the Senate Commerce Committee begins to consider reforms to ocean shipping policy, the American Soybean Association is pleased to share its support for the bipartisan *Ocean Shipping Reform Act* (S. 3580) sponsored by Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and Senator John Thune (R-SD). This legislation takes important steps to bring greater accountability and transparency to ocean carriers while improving efficiency throughout the system.

The American Soybean Association (ASA) represents more than 500,000 U.S. soybean farmers on domestic and international policy issues important to the soybean industry and has 26 affiliated state associations representing 30 primary soybean-producing states. Our soybean growers are meeting current market demand and harvesting an expected record crop of over 4.4 billion bushels this year—and the industry is preparing to meet even greater demand in the future. Soybeans and soy products are America’s leading agricultural export, with more than 60% of our crop exported globally. Because of this, ensuring our crop can be transported to international markets in a timely manner and remain competitive remains a top priority for soybean farmers.

While most American soybeans are exported using Panamax bulk carriers, nearly 10% of soybeans are exported via container. Shipping via container allows soybeans to be exported to emerging markets that may not have ports that can accommodate Panamax vessels and provides access to foreign markets for soy-based products. Furthermore, specialty-grown soybeans such as food grade soy and soybeans certified as non-GMO rely on containers for shipping due to the need for traceability in the soy supply chain. As delays and bottlenecks at our ports continue, ASA believes S. 3580 may help improve accountability among ocean carriers and streamline investigation and complaint processes at the Federal Maritime Commission (FMC).

Importantly, S. 3580 will provide FMC with new authority to improve the negotiation of service contracts and to self-investigate common carriers as needed. The legislation also directs FMC to enter into rulemaking to determine what is considered “unreasonable” when common carriers decline U.S. exports. ASA recognizes that there is no silver bullet that will solve current shipping

challenges but believes this legislation carefully identifies opportunities to improve regulation of the shipping industry without turning the entire industry on its head.

As the Senate Commerce Committee explores multiple shipping challenges and deliberates the *Ocean Shipping Reform Act*, ASA lends its voice to the many agricultural organizations that support this legislation. ASA appreciates your continued focus on supply chain and shipping challenges impacting the agricultural sector. We look forward to continuing to work with the committee to address the transportation needs of soybean growers and the agricultural industry at large.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brad Doyle". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Brad Doyle
President

Copy:

Senator Chuck Schumer, Majority Leader
Senator Mitch McConnell, Republican Leader
Senator Amy Klobuchar
Senator John Thune