

Oct 18, 1976

Office of the White House Press Secretary

NOTICE TO THE PRESS

The President has signed H.R. 1073 - Marine War Risk Insurance Extension.

This bill will amend Title XII of the Merchant Marine Act to extend the Marine War Risk Insurance Program until September 30, 1979. The program expired on September 7, 1975.

Title XII authorizes the Secretary of Commerce, with the approval of the President, to provide war risk and certain marine and liability insurance for the protection of vessels, cargoes, and crew life and personal effects when commercial war risk insurance is not available on reasonable terms and conditions.

Under the bill, in determining whether to issue insurance to a foreign flag vessel in the future, Commerce will be required to consider the characteristics of the vessel (such as its size, age, efficiency, and safety), its employment, and its general management.

H.R. 1073 will also require that all U.S. and foreign flag vessels covered by this program be subject to such vessel location reporting requirements as established by Commerce. Currently, all U.S. flag merchant vessels are required to file periodic location reports with Coast Guard stations. The bill will extend this requirement to foreign flag vessels covered by U.S. war risk insurance, a provision which both Commerce and DOD strongly support.

Finally, the bill will clarify that the insurance program covers containers, whether loaded or unloaded, as part of a vessel's cargo, and that Commerce may charge an annual fee to cover administrative expenses of the program.

The President has signed H.R. 13964 - Relief of Jeanette Green and Mary Jane Baker Nolan, which waives the statute of limitations to permit litigation against the United States by two widows.

H.R. 13964 will waive the two-year statute of limitations contained in the Suits of Admiralty Act, as well as any other statute of limitations which would act to bar the beneficiaries from bringing suits against the United States. The bill will also declare that its enactment shall not be construed as an inference of liability on the part of the United States.

The President has signed H.R. 13218 - Sale of the SS "United States" for use as a floating hotel. The ship is the largest and fastest passenger liner ever built in the United States.

The President has signed H.R. 1607 - Newspaper advertisements of State-operated lotteries.

H.R. 1607 remedies the lack of uniformity between the restrictions on advertising lotteries through radio or television broadcasts and those dealing with newspapers. In this regard, the bill:

- permits State conducted lotteries to advertise in newspapers published in adjacent States which operate lotteries; and
- permits the mailing of general circulation newspapers containing lottery advertisements or information.