

# U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Commerce Committee passes bipartisan legislation introduced by Baldwin to ease U.S. export shipping backlogs, boost Wisconsin exports

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, U.S. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) voted to pass the bipartisan *Ocean Shipping Reform Act* out of the Commerce Committee, and the legislation is now headed to the Senate Floor. Senator Baldwin co-sponsors the bipartisan legislation, led by Senators Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and John Thune (R-SD), that will level the playing field for American exporters by making it harder for ocean carriers to unreasonably refuse goods ready to export at ports.

“Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the export shipping backlog has impacted Made In America businesses, manufacturers, and workers as a result of anti-competitive, discriminatory practices in the ocean carrier industry,” **said Senator Tammy Baldwin.** “The bipartisan Ocean Shipping Reform Act will give a needed boost to Wisconsin’s agriculture economy by easing the unnecessary shipping backlogs, adding transparency to the ocean carrier operators, and supporting our Made in Wisconsin economy.”

The legislation earned the endorsement of the American Association of Port Authorities, which represents more than 130 port authorities across North and South America. The bill is also endorsed by more than 100 organizations including the Wisconsin Farm Bureau, Wisconsin Agri-Business Association, Association of Port Authorities, the Agriculture Transportation Coalition (AgTC), the National Retail Federation, and the American Trucking Association.

In addition to Senators Baldwin, Klobuchar, and Thune, the legislation is cosponsored by Senators John Hoeven (R-ND), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Roger Marshall (R-KS), Gary Peters (D-MI), Jerry Moran (R-KS), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Todd Young (R-IN), Mark Kelly (D-AZ), Mike Crapo (R-ID), Tina Smith (D-MN), Marsha Blackburn (R-TN), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Joni Ernst (R-IA), Catherine Cortez-Masto (D-NV), Mike Braun (R-IN), Raphael Warnock (D-GA), James Risch (R-ID), Michael Bennet (D-CO), Kevin Cramer (R-ND), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Roy Blunt (R-MO), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), John Boozman (R-AR), Deb Fischer (R-NE), Alex Padilla (D-CA), and John Hickenlooper (D-CO).

The *Ocean Shipping Reform Act* will:

- Require ocean carriers to certify that late fees —known in maritime parlance as “detention and demurrage” charges—comply with federal regulations or face penalties;
- Shift burden of proof regarding the reasonableness of “detention or demurrage” charges from the invoiced party to the ocean carrier;
- Prohibit ocean carriers from unreasonably declining shipping opportunities for U.S. exports, as determined by the FMC in new required rulemaking;
- Require ocean common carriers to report to the FMC each calendar quarter on total import/export tonnage and 20-foot equivalent units (loaded/empty) per vessel that makes port in the United States;
- Authorize the FMC to self-initiate investigations of ocean common carrier’s business practices and apply enforcement measures, as appropriate; and
- Establish new authority for the FMC to register shipping exchanges.

An online version of this release is available [here](#).