

## Utah senator introduces Jones Act repeal bill

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Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, has continued the call by some lawmakers to repeal the 1920 Merchant Marine Act, better known as the Jones Act, by introducing a bill called the Open America's Water Act, which would allow qualified, non-U.S.-flag vessels to operate between U.S. ports in the domestic trades.

For nearly 100 years, the Jones Act has required that only U.S.-owned, -flagged and -crewed vessels can transport waterborne commerce between U.S. coastal and inland waterways ports.

“Restricting trade between U.S. ports is a huge loss for American consumers and producers,” Lee (pictured above) said in a statement. “It is long past time to repeal the Jones Act entirely so that Alaskans, Hawaiians and Puerto Ricans aren't forced to pay higher prices for imported goods — and so they rapidly receive the help they need in the wake of natural disasters.”

Lee cited the Cato Institute's argument that the Jones Act generates a loss of tens of billions of dollars a year to the U.S. economy.

Lee follows in the footsteps of fellow longtime Jones Act critic Sen. John McCain, who died from the effects of a brain tumor last year.

However, Lee's bill will face stiff opposition, as most U.S. senators still support the Jones Act on the grounds of U.S. maritime jobs and national security. The Senate Commerce Committee's leadership echoed its support for cabotage laws during a [Wednesday hearing](#).