

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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TO THE MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the world's largest business federation representing more than three million businesses and organizations of every size, sector, and region, supports ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea ("Law of the Sea Treaty" or "Treaty"). With various nations claiming control of territory in the Arctic well beyond those nations' natural borders, ratification of the Law of the Sea Treaty will provide much-needed certainty and predictability.

In conjunction with ratification of the Treaty, the Chamber endorses establishment of an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in which the United States will exercise sovereign rights over living and non-living resources and the marine environment within 200 nautical miles of the coast. The Chamber favors extending the EEZ to the outer edge of the continental margin (which is composed of the Continental Shelf, the Continental Slope and the Continental Rise) where the continental margin extends beyond 200 nautical miles; some estimates indicate that the continental shelf of the United States extends 600 miles from the coast of Alaska, north and east of the Bering Strait. Upon ratification of the Treaty, the United States should promptly file a claim with United Nations Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf to establish that the United States' undersea shelf extends beyond the 200-mile EEZ.

The Chamber notes, however, that the Treaty's environmental provisions are written in a very vague and overbroad fashion, and could be interpreted in a way that conflicts with the nation's environmental statutes, such as the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act. The Chamber, therefore, urges the Senate, in its advice and consent, to state clearly that the Treaty's environmental provisions are not self-executing, and that ratification of the Treaty does not create private rights of action or domestic legal rights against the U.S. government or its nationals.

Ratification of the Law of the Sea Treaty will protect the claims of the United States to the vast natural resources contained on the ocean floor, and will ensure that ships flying American flags will travel safely and securely through international waters. Therefore, the Chamber urges the Senate to ratify the Law of the Sea Treaty.

Sincerely,



R. Bruce Josten