

**In Support Of House of Representatives Legislation H.R. 1494, An Act Cited As The “Blue Water Navy Ship Accountability Act”, Which Would Direct The Secretary Of Defense To Review The Operation Of Certain Ships During The Vietnam Era**

Referred to: The Legislative Programs, Education, and Community Services Committee (Chairman David B. Donaldson and Legislators Archer, Greene, Lopez, and Wawro)

Chairman of the Legislative Programs, Education, and Community Services Committee, David B. Donaldson, and Committee Members Legislators Archer, Greene, Lopez and Wawro offer the following:

WHEREAS, Blue Water Navy Veterans that served in the Vietnam War aboard Navy Ships docked close to the shore of Vietnam, operated in Vietnam’s close coastal waters and/or that sent smaller vessels to shore have documented illnesses and disease attributed to Agent Orange and other herbicides that the United States military sprayed over Vietnam to reduce forest cover and crops used by the enemy; and

WHEREAS, these Blue Water Navy Veterans are experiencing lengthy delays in having their benefits claims processed due to comprehensive searches to determine which ships are eligible for coverage under the current laws; and

WHEREAS, the Blue Water Navy Accountability Act directs the Secretary of Defense to review the logs of each Navy ship under the authority of the Secretary of the Navy that is known to have operated in the waters near Vietnam during the Vietnam Era (January 9, 1962 through May 7, 1975) to determine, for each such ship, the date(s) so operated and its closest proximity to shore during such operation; and

WHEREAS, upon a determination that any such ship so operated, the Secretary of Defense shall provide such documentation, together with the information described about the ship, to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs within one year; and

WHEREAS, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall make publicly available all unclassified information provided to the Secretary; and

WHEREAS, the compiling of such information in advance will help veterans who are currently sick or, in some cases, have died and claims are being made by their surviving families, to access the benefits without undo delays; and

WHEREAS, the United States House of Representatives passed veterans legislation (H.R. 2189) which included H.R.-1494 on October 28, 2013 to ensure Vietnam Veterans get the benefits that they have earned and deserve; now, therefore be it

