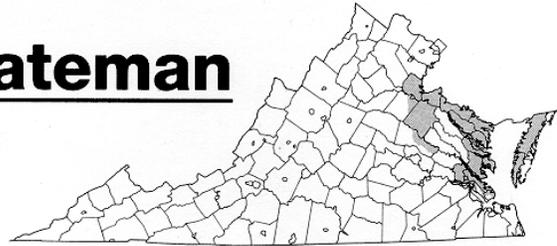


**CONGRESSMAN**  
**Herbert H. Bateman**

*First District of Virginia*

*"America's First District"*



2350 Rayburn HOB, Washington, D.C. 20515 ■ (202) 225-4261

---

## **NEWS**

---

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 4, 1997

CONTACT: Maureen Cragin

Ryan Vaart

(202) 225-2539

**Opening Statement of the Honorable Herbert H. Bateman**  
**on**  
**the Merchant Marine Panel's Recommendations for H.R. 1119,**  
**the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1998**

My opening statement will be brief so that we might proceed directly with consideration of the Panel's recommendations. The Chairman's mark that is before you for consideration consists of two parts. The first part consists of the proposed Panel recommendations for the Panama Canal Commission, including the annual authorization for expenditures and the transition related provisions. This first part, if adopted today and at the full committee markup next week, will be included as title 35 in H.R. 1119, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1998. The second part of the Chairman's mark includes the annual authorization for the U.S. Maritime Administration and a number of what I term administrative, correcting, good government or clerical amendments. This part, again if adopted at the full committee markup next week, will be included as title 36 in the Defense Authorization Act. I will describe each part in greater detail at the conclusion of the Ranking Member's opening statement. Before I recognize Congressman Abercrombie, I want to express my thanks to the members of the Panel for their hard work and also to their staffs.

Many of you are aware that the National Security Committee shares jurisdiction over a number of the provisions relating to the Panama Canal Commission with the Civil Service Subcommittee of the House Government Reform and Oversight Committee. Our respective staffs have literally worked weeks to assure that this Panel's recommendations will not result in a sequential referral to that Committee. I, once again, want to thank Chairman Mica for his assistance and cooperation in this effort, and to his staff, George Nesterzuk, Gary Ewing and Charlie Koons for their able counsel. My thanks also goes to the Panama Canal Commission staff for their assistance in developing the package that is before you today.

Finally, many of you have indicated a desire to enact a new provision which is being referred to as “build and charter”. I am pleased to report that this provision will likely be part of a larger reform package that will come before the full committee next week. While we have not yet resolved all of the details or the jurisdictional hurdles, I would urge you to support this proposal at next week’s full committee markup. It will, I hope, offer this committee the chance to build a modern combat logistics force using long term charters. Without this program it will be virtually impossible to find the up-front dollars needed to maintain our logistics and auxiliary fleet.

I will now recognize the Congressman from the beautiful state of Hawaii and the Ranking Member of the Panel, the Honorable Neil Abercrombie, for any opening statement he wishes to make.