

City of Philadelphia



Council of the City of Philadelphia
Office of the Chief Clerk
Room 402, City Hall
Philadelphia

(Resolution No. 090888)

RESOLUTION

Recognizing and honoring the history of the SS UNITED STATES and its importance to Philadelphia, maritime history and the country as a whole; appreciating the opportunity to use the ship's redevelopment as a catalyst for development on the banks of the Delaware River; acknowledging the negative impact that the ship's current condition has on current efforts to redevelop the waterfront; thanking the SS UNITED STATES Conservancy for its efforts to save the ship; and encouraging the ship's current owner, Genting Hong Kong Ltd. (formerly Star Cruises), to correct the current conditions.

WHEREAS, The SS UNITED STATES was constructed at the Newport News Shipyards in Virginia and christened on June 23, 1951. The ship was built not only as a passenger ship to compete with the likes of the QUEEN MARY but also as troop ship under U.S. Navy specifications and was capable of transporting, at speeds upwards of 36 knots, 15,000 troops anywhere in the world; and

WHEREAS, The SS UNITED STATES was designed by William Francis Gibbs, born and raised in Philadelphia, who gained renown as the nation's foremost civilian and military ship designer during two world wars and the intervening years; and

WHEREAS, The steel for the SS UNITED STATES was supplied by the Lukens Steel Corporation, Coatesville, Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, The SS UNITED STATES is 990 feet in length, 110 feet longer than the TITANIC; and

WHEREAS, On her maiden voyage on July 3, 1952, the SS UNITED STATES captured the transatlantic speed record from the QUEEN MARY, cruising at 36 knots and completing the crossing in 3 days, 10 hours, 40 minutes a record that still stands today; and

WHEREAS, Tens of thousands of people immigrating to the United States of America were transported by the SS UNITED STATES; and

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WHEREAS, In addition to these immigrants, the SS UNITED STATES hosted world leaders, presidents, royalty, Hollywood stars and leaders of industry. Princess Grace and her husband Prince Ranier were passengers on their visits to Philadelphia, as well as the Annenbergs and other prominent Philadelphians. After receiving a Rhodes Scholarship, Bill Clinton travelled on the ship on his way to Oxford University in 1968; and

WHEREAS, After 17 years of service and 2,770,844 nautical miles without a mechanical mishap that caused a schedule delay, the SS UNITED STATES was retired in 1969; and

WHEREAS, The SS UNITED STATES, at the time of her retirement, was universally recognized as the largest, safest and fastest passenger ship on the seas and is still regarded as the fastest ship to ever sail the world's oceans. Many believe that the ship represents the apex of transatlantic travel and of America's industrial might; and

WHEREAS, The late Walter Cronkite, a passenger on the SS UNITED STATES, likened her national significance to that of the Statue of Liberty, the Spirit of St. Louis, the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall. He stated that it would be a "crime against history" if the ship were lost; and

WHEREAS, The SS UNITED STATES is included in the Pennsylvania register of historic places and the National Register of Historic Places and has been described by the registries as a place of "compelling national significance"; and

WHEREAS, Since 1996, the SS UNITED STATES has been docked at Pier 82 in the City of Philadelphia. The ship is inactive and its current condition is a blight on the surrounding community, hampering waterfront development; and

WHEREAS, Maritime Investments, Inc., a Delaware Corporation and wholly owned subsidiary of Norwegian Cruise Line whose parent corporation is Genting Hong Kong, Ltd., a corporation organized under the laws of Malaysia, owns the SS UNITED STATES. The company has offered the ship for sale to any and all buyers, including those who have expressed an interest in using the ship for scrap metal; and

WHEREAS, In order to successfully develop the Central Delaware riverfront, the current condition of the SS UNITED STATES must be addressed by either rehabilitating the ship or removing her from her current berth; and

WHEREAS, A rehabilitated SS UNITED STATES would be an exciting addition to the Delaware River that could be successful tourist attraction and that already includes the Battleship NEW JERSEY, the USS OLYMPIA, the Submarine BECUNA, the tugboat JUPITER, and the tallship GAZELA; and

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WHEREAS, A retrofit of the SS UNITED STATES could be accomplished in Philadelphia's shipyard. The refit would create hundreds of jobs for a number of skilled laborers; and

WHEREAS, The SS UNITED STATES Conservancy is a non-profit organization dedicated to saving the vessel by raising funds to purchase the ship and create a viable rehabilitation project; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Recognizes and honors the history of the SS UNITED STATES and its importance to Philadelphia, maritime history and the country as a whole; appreciates the opportunity to use the ship's redevelopment as a catalyst for development on the banks of the Delaware River; acknowledges the negative impact that the ship's current condition has on current efforts to redevelop the waterfront; thanks the SS UNITED STATES Conservancy for its efforts to save the ship; and encourages the ship's current owner, Genting Hong Kong Ltd. (formerly Star Cruises), to correct the current conditions;

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to the SS UNITED STATES Conservancy as the sincere sentiments of this body and that a copy of this resolution be provided to Genting Hong Kong Ltd.

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CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the third of December, 2009.

Anna C. Verna
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Michael A. Decker
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember DiCicco

Sponsored by: Councilmember DiCicco, Council President Verna and
Councilmember Kenney