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House Votes To Let Shipping Line Sell Guam, Hawaii Bears

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WASHINGTON — The House passed and sent to the Senate Wednesday a measure that would permit Pacific Far East Lines (PFEL) to sell its two vessels, the Guam Bear and the Hawaii Bear, or to operate them in some trade other than their present restricted routes between Guam and the West Coast.

An act of Congress is necessary because PFEL acquired the ships in a 1967 trade with the U.S. Maritime Administration that also required the passage of a special law because PFEL was operating subsidized shipping routes elsewhere and otherwise would have been ineligible for the trade-in program.

Under terms of the 1967 deal, PFEL was prohibited from selling the two "Bears" to anyone other than a successor on the West Coast Guam route. PFEL now claims that it is losing \$100,000 a month because of rigid round-trip restrictions while its unsubsidized competitors, which are able to serve the route while sailing between California and Asia, are making money.