Aug. 3 — To the Editor:

The recent op-ed by Gary Lambert, Larry A. Mayer and Jim Grady on the Law of the Sea Treaty raised questions about my position on it. I am an unequivocal supporter of this treaty, which will strengthen our national security and our economy.

Endorsed by every living Secretary of State and every Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff since it was first sent to the Senate in 1994, the Law of the Sea Treaty would strengthen legal protections for our Navy's ships and sailors as they operate in ports around the world.

The treaty will provide U.S. companies with secure rights to offshore resources critical for our economic competitiveness. By becoming party to the treaty, U.S. companies would have the certainty they need to seek oil, gas and rare earth minerals up to 600 nautical miles off the U.S. coast. Our dependence on foreign oil is well known. Less often mentioned is our dependence on China for rare earth minerals, which are used in the production of next-generation batteries and other high-tech devices crucial to our emerging clean-energy industry and to the larger economy. These minerals are also vital for our defense industry, which uses them in weapons production.

Already, the treaty has been ratified by 162 other nations, including China, and the United States risks being left behind as other nations take advantage of their own offshore resources. It's no wonder the U.S. Chamber of Commerce is one voice among many calling for ratification.

Ratifying the Law of the Sea Treaty is in the best interest of our economy and national security, and I encourage other senators to join me in support.

U.S. Senator Jeanne Shaheen

D-N.H.