

MARAD Celebrates Christening of State of Maine Vessel at Hanwha Philadelphia Shipyard



New vessel symbolizes new era of maritime dominance

From the U.S. Department of Transportation, Aug. 26, 2025

PHILADELPHIA, Pennsylvania – U.S. Maritime Administration (MARAD) today celebrated the christening of the *State of Maine*, the third of five cutting-edge National Security Multi-Mission Vessels (NSMV), at Hanwha Philly Shipyard. Built for Maine Maritime Academy, the *State of Maine* will serve as a next generation training ship, supporting both the academic development of cadets and America’s humanitarian relief.

Spearheaded by the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Maritime Administration, the NSMV program is revitalizing America’s maritime training infrastructure—a cornerstone of President Trump’s [Executive Order](#) on restoring maritime dominance. The program directly supports nearly 1,500 skilled jobs in Philadelphia and boosts American competitiveness at sea and ashore.

President Lee Jae Myung of the Republic of Korea, and Acting Maritime Administrator Sang Yi, shared remarks during the ceremony.

“State of Maine is more than a ship – it’s a strategic investment in the people and infrastructure that keep America’s maritime economy strong,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Sean P. Duffy. “Our cadets deserve cutting-edge tools and training to become the industry leaders who will keep our nation strong and ready when it matters most. Under President Donald Trump’s leadership, American shipyards can

and will produce more big, beautiful ships again.”

“This vessel marks a new era for American maritime power,” said Acting Maritime Administrator Sang Yi. “MARAD’s mission to modernize sealift and empower the Merchant Marine hinges on relentless innovation and partnership. Together, we can build the fleet America needs to secure our future and dominate the seas.”

“Maine Maritime Academy is internationally recognized as a leader in maritime education and this vessel represents a major step forward in our mission to train the world’s finest mariners,” said Maine Maritime Academy President Craig Johnson. “As our first purpose-built training ship, the State of Maine will provide world-class learning experiences for cadets pursuing unlimited tonnage licenses. It’s a game-changer for our mission and a powerful reflection of what’s possible through strong partnerships and shared vision.”

Additional Information:

MARAD is replacing aging training vessels from the National Defense Reserve Fleet with new, purpose-built ships designed to meet modern academy needs—and to provide critical capabilities for disaster response and national emergencies.

Stretching 525 feet long, a single NSMV can accommodate 600 cadets and up to 1,000 people in times of humanitarian need. These vessels boast eight classrooms, cutting-edge labs, a training bridge, auditorium, helicopter pad, advanced medical facilities, and roll-on/roll-off and container capacity—ensuring cadets get unmatched hands-on training.

State of Maine joins *Empire State* and *Patriot State* already in service, with two more NSMVs under construction at Hanwha Philly Shipyard, destined for Texas and California maritime academies.

NSMV Key Specs:

- Length: 525' 1"
 - Design Draft: 21' 4"
 - Breadth: 88' 7"
 - Depth: 55' 1.5"
 - Speed: 18 knots
 - Deadweight: 8,487 MT
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HASC Marks National Defense Authorization Bill

Edited by Richard R. Burgess, Senior Editor

Arlington, Va. – The House Armed Services Committee (HASC) filed the bill for the 2026 National Defense Authorization Act, the bill's leaders, Committee Chairman Sen. Roger Wicker (R-Miss.) and Sen. Jack Reed (D- R.I.) announced in a July 16 release.

Some announced naval-related provisions are listed below:

- Authorizes procurement for not more than five Columbia-class submarines.

- Authorizes a block buy of up to 15 Medium Landing Ships (LSM) to support testing and experimentation of the Marine Littoral Regiment formation.

- Limits funding for TAGOS Ship unless the Secretary of the Navy provides information on the Navy's management of the program and an assessment of alternative solutions for the mission.

- Requires the Navy, in implementing the Medium Landing Ship and Light Replenishment Oiler programs, to utilize a Vessel Construction Manager (VCM) acquisition strategy, employing commercial design standards, construction practices, and an external entity to contract for construction.

- Exempts unmanned surface vessels and unmanned underwater vehicles from the Senior Technical Authority requirement and limits certain technical requirements from the Chief Engineer of the Naval Sea Systems Command without prior approval of the program manager.

- Modifies certification requirements of operational demonstrations for propulsion and electrical systems of large and medium unmanned surface vessels to increase industrial base participation.

- Limits funding to certain Navy-developed software for autonomy and command and control of unmanned surface vessels.

- Directs a briefing to the congressional defense

committees to prioritize innovative, commercially driven solutions to deliver a scalable medium unmanned surface vessel (MUSV) capability that meets the urgent needs of the fleet while fostering a competitive industrial base.

- Requires the Navy to move leadership for conventional surface ship maintenance to the Type Commanders, delegates decision-making authority to project managers, port engineers, and ship commanding officers, and directs a new contracting strategy that emphasizes workload stability and collaborative planning.
- Requires the Navy to investigate, and where feasible qualify and fully integrate, 23 advanced technologies and processes into Navy surface ship readiness.
- Supports amphibious warship production and readiness by limiting funding of the Secretary of the Navy and the Secretary of Defense if the 30-year shipbuilding plan does not comply with the statutory requirement for 31 amphibious ships, 15 defines “temporarily unavailable” within the 31 amphibious ship requirements, and requires a plan to maintain and extend the service lives of amphibious ships
- Requires DOD to develop a comprehensive plan to establish a government-controlled open mission systems computing environment for all variants and blocks of the F-35 aircraft operated by the DOD.
- Directs the Navy and Air Force to conduct a comparative study, independent of the air vehicle manufacturer, on

the two propeller systems on the C-130J platform.

- Accelerates development of the nuclear-armed sea-launched cruise missile and creates a supplementary parallel pathway for rapid fielding.
- Strongly encourages the Secretary of Defense to invite the naval forces of Taiwan to the Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercise, as appropriate, and requires a notification and justification if the Secretary chooses not to do so.
- Requires the Navy to develop options for two sources of domestic solid rocket motors in the Navy Modular Missile program.
- Directs a briefing on opportunities for the Irregular Warfare Technical Support Directorate to complement innovation efforts by Naval Special Warfare Command for research, experimentation, and prototyping of unmanned maritime vessels.
- Authorizes personnel end strength for the active component at 344,600 for the Navy; 172,300 for the Marine Corps; 57,500 for the Navy Reserve; 33,600 for the Marine Corps Reserve; and 7,000 for the Coast Guard Reserve.

[Read the FY26 NDAA Bill Language.](#)

[Read the FY26 NDAA Executive Summary.](#)

Securing the Backbone: The Defense Industrial Base



PHOTO BY: Air Force Staff Sgt. Marco Gomez

By [Ryan Caughill](#), President, Western New York Council, Navy League of the United States.

“You can’t fight tomorrow’s war with yesterday’s plans.”

In the summer of 2018, I completed my internship at Moog Inc., one of the United States’ premier defense contractors. My role was in Environmental Health & Safety, but my mission went deeper: I was tasked with modernizing and guiding emergency

management planning across an organization that was deeply integrated into the Defense Industrial Base (DIB), and yet, lacked a dedicated emergency management function.

Like my time later at M&T Bank, this experience left a lasting impression. It showed me that even companies at the forefront of defense technology can have blind spots when it comes to continuity, resilience, and crisis preparedness.

[While this article isn't just about my singular experience, but a holistic and general overview,] that's what makes the Defense Industrial Base one of the most paradoxical critical infrastructure sectors in America: incredibly advanced, but dangerously lacking.

The Backbone Behind the Uniform

The Defense Industrial Base is more than just tanks, missiles, or aircraft. It's an expansive network of over 100,000 private companies that provide products, services, logistics, and technologies to support the U.S. military.

This includes:

- Weapons systems and munitions
- Aerospace components and military-grade software
- Advanced electronics and cyber capabilities
- Research and development institutions
- Transportation and supply chain networks
- Small manufacturers producing critical, often irreplaceable, parts

Some of these are Fortune 500 giants. Many are small, family-owned machine shops in rural communities. All are vital.

But here's the problem: there is no unified resilience standard across the DIB. And that's a problem hiding in plain sight.

The Vulnerabilities No One Wants to Talk About

During my time at Moog, I saw firsthand how emergency management often sits outside the core of DIB corporate culture. Not out of apathy, but due to the sheer scale and complexity of operations. Many companies have excellent safety and security programs, but few have comprehensive crisis management systems. Fewer still have trained emergency managers or business continuity professionals guiding cross-functional coordination across cyber, physical, and operational risks. This isn't to say they don't exist, I've met some, and they do a really great job.

That makes this sector vulnerable in ways most people don't understand.

The DIB is:

- Extremely decentralized: A single failed supplier can halt delivery of critical weapons platforms.
- Highly classified: Cyber breaches can compromise national defense secrets, yet many companies, especially smaller ones, lack mature cyber defenses.
- Logistically fragile: Long-lead items, global supply chains, and just-in-time manufacturing leave little room for error.
- Resource-limited: Many smaller firms simply don't have the bandwidth or expertise to build robust resilience programs.

Worse yet, we take it for granted that these companies – because of what they do – are already hardened. That's not always true.

Why This Sector Isn't Taken Seriously – Until It's Too Late

The Defense Industrial Base occupies an odd place in the national consciousness. We respect the military. We fund the military. But we rarely consider who makes the military work.

The supply chains, R&D labs, fabrication shops, and logistics hubs that build and sustain America's warfighting capability are not invincible. And yet, the DIB isn't regularly treated like critical infrastructure in the traditional emergency management sense, even though it underpins our strategic deterrence, military readiness, and wartime surge capacity.

That disconnect has consequences. If a natural disaster, ransomware attack, insider threat, or geopolitical disruption strikes a key node in this ecosystem, the effects won't be immediate headlines. They'll show up months or years later when a military platform is delayed or compromised.

In an age of strategic competition with China and resurgent threats in Europe and the Middle East, that delay could mean the difference between deterrence and disaster.

Strengthening the Arsenal of the Republic

If we want the DIB to remain viable, competitive, and secure, we must elevate resilience as a strategic imperative, not an afterthought.

At the Federal Level:

- The DoD must go beyond cybersecurity compliance and require holistic emergency management, business continuity, and crisis communications programs for Tier 1 and Tier 2 contractors
- Congress should fund regional DIB resilience initiatives and technical assistance hubs to help small firms build preparedness capacity
- DIB firms must be integrated into DHS-FEMA and CISA exercises, not treated as isolated contractors

In the Private Sector:

Contractors should invest in full-time emergency managers or resilience officers, especially at multi-site operations

Continuity of Operations plans (COOP) must be tested regularly and integrated across functions – especially cyber, facilities, HR, and production

Leadership should prioritize exercises and scenario planning, particularly for cyber-physical convergence threats

Across the Supply Chain:

Vendors must be mapped and tiered by criticality, with redundancy plans in place for sole-source dependencies.

Smaller manufacturers should be given access to resilience toolkits and grant-supported planning assistance.

For the Defense Community:

Collaboration must improve across DoD, DHS, and the intelligence community to identify emerging threats to the DIB
Emergency management professionals should be embedded, or a partner, in acquisition planning and supplier vetting

The public and political class must recognize that defense readiness includes domestic resilience

Resilience is Readiness

The Defense Industrial Base is one of the quietest, but most consequential, sectors in the nation's infrastructure portfolio. You don't see it in parades. But it's there in every missile defense test, every jet engine, every encrypted radio, and every armored vehicle.

If we allow it to weaken, structurally, logistically, or digitally, we erode not just our defense capability, but our credibility.

We cannot afford to wait for crisis to realize that the arsenal of our Republic isn't just built on innovation or budgets.

It's built on resilience.

These challenges aren't theoretical, they're unfolding in real

time. Delays in the F-35 rollout, the Navy's struggles and eventual cancellation with the Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) program, and schedule slippages in the next-generation aircraft carriers, guided missile frigates, and Columbia-class ballistic missile submarines all point to a sector under immense strain. While these issues stem from a mix of design complexity, funding cycles, and industrial bottlenecks, one thing is clear: the Defense Industrial Base cannot afford additional disruption.

A well-funded, well-placed crisis management function, integrated at both the facility and enterprise level, won't solve design flaws or procurement hurdles, but it can absorb shock, accelerate recovery, and ensure continuity when disaster strikes. In a sector already grappling with compounding risks, crisis management isn't a luxury, it's a strategic buffer against the unpredictable threats of 21st century warfare.

Trump's MARAD Pick Signals Commercial Maritime Focus



ARLINGTON, Va. – President Donald Trump’s decision to nominate former Maersk executive Stephen Carmel to lead the Maritime Administration, replacing retired Navy submarine commander Brent Sadler as the nominee, signals a strategic pivot toward commercial maritime expertise as the administration pursues its ambitious shipbuilding revival agenda.

The nominee switch reflects the administration’s belief that rebuilding America’s maritime industrial base requires deep industry experience rather than purely military credentials. Carmel’s four decades in commercial shipping – from tanker captain to corporate executive – align with Trump’s emphasis on taking a business approach to maritime challenges.

From Bridge to Boardroom

Carmel brings a rare combination of operational and executive experience to MARAD. A 1979 graduate of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, he achieved his first command – a 40,000-ton clean product tanker – at age 26, according to his biography at the academy where he now serves on the Board of Visitors.

“Steve began his career sailing as a deck officer and Master primarily on tankers for Maritime Overseas Corporation and

Military Sealift Command," his USMMA biography states, before transitioning to corporate roles at Maersk Line Limited, where he served as senior vice president for maritime services.

Currently president of U.S. Marine Management LLC, Carmel was a Ph.D. candidate at Old Dominion University.

The Trump Administration's April executive order establishing a Maritime Action Plan emphasized commercial competitiveness over traditional military-centered thinking. A fact sheet on the White House website claims that 0.2% of the world's ships are built by the United States, compared to 74% built by China.

Carmel's experience with Maersk Line Limited – a major participant in the Maritime Security Program – provides some insight into the public-private partnerships the administration seeks to expand. His corporate background appears to be seen as a plug as the administration focuses on expanding the U.S.-flag fleet for both international and domestic trade, and as MARAD implements new initiatives including the Maritime Security Trust Fund and Maritime Prosperity Zones.

"Steve knows maritime, he knows the American Flag, and he sailed commercially in the U.S. Merchant Marine," said Dredging Contractors of America CEO William Doyle in supporting the nomination.

Carmel's selection follows the administration's pattern of choosing industry veterans for key maritime positions, including the creation of a new Office of Maritime and Industrial Capacity at the National Security Council. This approach contrasts with previous administrations' emphasis on military appointees for these types of roles.

If confirmed, Carmel would become the first MARAD administrator since 2005 to hold a Master's Unlimited license, underscoring the administration's preference for hands-on

maritime experience.

His advisory experience on the Chief of Naval Operations Executive Panel and Naval Studies Board provides some additional government experience, potentially easing coordination between defense and transportation maritime programs.

Implementation Challenges Ahead

The nominee inherits a MARAD facing significant personnel challenges, with approximately 12% of authorized positions vacant, according to recent reports. If confirmed, he will be a key figure in Trump's ambitious maritime agenda, including expanded shipbuilding incentives and Arctic strategy development.

Carmel has corporate experience managing profit-and-loss responsibility for complex vessel operations, which may be helpful as MARAD balances expanded responsibilities with constrained resources.

The Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Technology will consider Carmel's nomination as the administration pushes to implement its Maritime Action Plan. With Trump promising to "resurrect the American shipbuilding industry," Carmel's confirmation could signal a new commercial-first era in the U.S. maritime industry.

Sea-Air-Space: TRANSCOM Chief Touts Navy, Merchant Marine

Cooperation



Air Force General Randall Reed, commander of U.S. Transportation Command, discussed the strength of the Navy-Merchant Marine connection on April 8. *Photo credit: Dan Goodrich*

Air Force General Randall Reed, commander of U.S. Transportation Command, walked attendees at the Navy League Luncheon on April 8 through a history lesson of national and international conflicts to show the importance of the team of the U.S. Navy and Merchant Marine.

As a boy growing up in the Hampton Roads, Virginia, area, he would ride his bicycle to the historic Fort Grove and watch commercial ships sail by, followed by gray Navy ships from Norfolk Naval Base.

“The inextricable link between Navy combatants and our commercial Merchant Marine, the combination of those two makes our country great and that is what also makes TRANSCOM great,” he said.

Throughout American history, the Navy, often at incredible odds, has made the waterways safe so merchant ships could carry supplies. Some of the historical issues are familiar to the audience at Sea-Air-Space, Reed said.

During this year’s conference, “We’ve talked about trouble with shipbuilding, we’ve talked about supply chains, we’ve talked about contested logistics, long distances. And the next fight we have coming up, there’s this thing about blockades we have to consider. We have very capable adversaries with very large fleets. There’s a need for shallow draft ships and we have to get the mission done for sustainment. If this isn’t enough to keep you up at night, then you probably miss the fact that I’m not talking about today. I’m actually talking about the challenges that we had during the Revolutionary War,” Reed said.

“And the message here, ladies and gentlemen, is we’ve been here before, and during that time we had just as much uncertainty.”

Lessons from other periods in history are also still relevant, Reed said, such as during the War of 1812, when the U.S. Navy swept away threats on the water, in this case Lake Erie, so the Merchant Marine could supply the front lines from behind.

“So, in this case, once again, it’s the Navy being able to fight, set the conditions to get some kind of sea control, to allow the Merchant Marine to provide the sustainment that’s needed for the rest of the force.”

That carried on through two world wars, and especially World War II, when the Merchant Marine was called upon to perform sustainment heroics, at great cost to its ships and crews.

“And with that, we became the nation that the world needed us to be, to have great influence to partner with allies, partners and friends, in order to create a period of peace for the last 80 years that has delivered for all of us, I’m told, economic prosperity that the world has never seen,” Reed said. “And so with that, I want to take a moment to pause and say the combination of the Navy and the Merchant Marine at that time was really incredible and actually changed the world.”

Going forward, Reed said sustainment is still the “name of the game,” only now it’s contested by groups such as the Houthi rebels from Yemen who don’t have to have a lot in the way of resources.

The Merchant Marine needs newer ships and better equipment, Reed said, and he’s been telling that to supportive members of the U.S. House and Senate.

“I’m telling them that the ages of our ships right now are way too old, and we need to get younger ships and I’ll take them however I can get them. But the main thing is, it’s not necessarily for the ships and the platforms, it’s also for the proof force because we have a very capable proof force and they need the best in the biggest equipment that we can absolutely get for them.”

This was brought home to him during a recent visit to the Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, New York, Reed said. There, he witnessed 14 cadets receiving expeditionary medals from the secretary of transportation, a scene he said nearly brought him to tears.

“Think about that. Expeditionary medals on a cadet because as part of their education they take to sea, and these cadets have actually seen combat. They’ve actually been in harm’s way. They were actually telling us stories of what it’s like to sail past Yemen and watch things go over their head or to watch the Navy actually engage targets to protect them. And

they were not afraid. In fact, they were ready to go back for more. And so, ladies and gentlemen, we need to do this for them.”



Medal of Honor winner Edward C. Byers Jr. was awarded the Admiral Arleigh Burke Leadership Award.

Photo Credit: Dan Goodrich

Awards

Following the lunch, the annual Navy League Awards were presented:

- The Admiral Vern Clark Individual Award went to Angelo Owens, the safety and occupational health division director at the Fleet Readiness Center East.
- The Admiral Vern Clark Unit Safety Award went to

Airborne Command & Control (VAW) 117 Wallbangers.

- The General James L. Jones Individual Award went to Deputy Chief Ryan Tworek at Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, California.
- The General James L. Jones Unit Safety Award went to Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, California.
- The Albert A. Michelson Award went to Robert Taylor of Bardex Corp.
- The Fleet Chester W. Nimitz Award went to Robert “Scott” Forney III of General Atomics Electromagnetic Systems.
- The Admiral Arleigh Burke Leadership Award went to Master Chief Special Warfare Operator (SEAL) Edward C. Byers Jr., U.S. Navy, retired.

“I really do look out at this room and I see the fabric of America, the threads that hold our nation together during our most precious times” Byers said upon accepting the award.

Sea-Air-Space: SHIPS Act Aims to Counteract China's Maritime Dominance



A Taiwanese Yang Ming cargo ship at the Port of Los Angeles.
Photo credit: Port of Los Angeles

Most observers agree it's a national security imperative for the United States to counteract growing Chinese maritime domination. The imbalance is stark: Just 80 U.S.-flagged vessels conduct international commerce today, compared with China's 5,500 vessels. But how should America slow this worrisome trend?

One answer may be the [Shipbuilding and Harbor Infrastructure for Prosperity and Security \(SHIPS\) for America Act](#), a bipartisan bill to revitalize the U.S. Merchant Marine.

The measure seeks to grow the U.S. international fleet by 250 ships in 10 years through executive-level oversight; consistent funding for shipbuilding; and shipyard worker recruitment, training, and retention.

"I think one of the most crucial and important aspects of the SHIPS Act itself is not even so much what's in it but that it's a comprehensive approach," said Mark Vlaun, deputy

general counsel for American Roll-On Roll-Off Carrier Group, at a Sea-Air-Space 2025 panel on April 9. “It’s almost strategic in its own right.”

Among other provisions, the measure would establish for the first time a Maritime Security Trust Fund, similar to the Highway Trust Fund. The fund would provide a steady stream of support for ship construction, including financial incentives; assistance to small shipyards; loan guarantees; and maritime college and career training.

“We’ve always been a maritime nation, but the truth is we’ve lost ground to China, who now dominates international shipping and can build merchant and military ships much more quickly than we can,” said Sen. Mark Kelly, Democrat of Arizona, in a statement introducing the SHIPS Act measure on Dec. 19, 2024.

Kelly, a U.S. Navy veteran and the first U.S. Merchant Marine Academy graduate to serve in Congress, is joined on the bill by Senate co-sponsor Sen. Todd Young (R-Indiana), and House co-sponsors Reps. Trent Kelly, (R-Mississippi), and John Garamendi, (D-California).

The thrust of the legislation reinforces key themes that surfaced repeatedly at Sea-Air-Space 2025: A revived U.S. Merchant Marine attracts more public and [private investments](#) in commercial shipyards and suppliers. This in turn accelerates [Navy efforts to improve](#) its public shipyards, shore infrastructure, and best practices in shipbuilding. Combined, these efforts lead to greater maritime military and economic security overall.

Navy and Coast Guard shipbuilding acquisition can already benefit from lessons learned in programs run by the Maritime Administration (MARAD), a U.S. Department of Transportation office that supports maritime transportation infrastructure, including shipyard grants and loan guarantees.

Panelist Dave Heller, MARAD’s associate administrator for

Business and Finance Development, said he's seen how commercial practices at some of the smaller shipyards can speed the construction of military icebreakers and other similarly sized vessels.

"There are lots of ways to get what you need, to get it in the water quickly, and that's usually through a commercial model," Heller said.

Heller's office supports a variety of opportunities in ship infrastructure support, including an \$8.75 million Small Shipyard Grant Program that's inviting applications until May 15, 2025. Shipyards generally with fewer than 1,200 employees can apply for grants averaging \$820,000 for capital improvements and maritime training programs.

Supporters of the SHIPS Act argue the measure could better coordinate these programs and national policies to encourage systemic, long-term changes in U.S. maritime policy. "Continuing to maintain a maritime presence is absolutely imperative for us," said panelist Robert Hurd, legislative director for Rep. Garamendi. "[Capitol] Hill in general is really excited for this opportunity

Garbarino Leads Bipartisan Push to Modernize U.S. Merchant Marine Academy

From the office of Rep. Andrew R. Garbino, March 27, 2025

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congressman Andrew R. Garbarino (R-NY-02), a member of the United States Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA)

Board of Visitors, today introduced bipartisan legislation to authorize more than \$1 billion over 10 years for a full-scale campus modernization of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, New York.

The bill is cosponsored by Representatives Laura Gillen (R-NY-04), Nick LaLota (R-NY-01), Tom Suozzi (D-NY-03), and Jen Kiggans (R-VA-02) underscoring a shared commitment to bolstering national security and maritime readiness through investment in one of the nation's five federal service academies.

"For generations, the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy has trained the men and women who keep our supply chains moving and our national defense strong," said Rep. Garbarino. *"But the infrastructure on campus must keep up with the rigorous demands placed on today's Midshipmen. This bill ensures the Academy remains a world-class institution worthy of its mission."*

The legislation authorizes \$1.02 billion from FY2026 to FY2035 via the Maritime Security Trust Fund, beginning with \$54 million for design and planning in the first year and annual construction funding of over \$107 million thereafter. The bill calls for full operational continuity at the Academy throughout construction and recommends using design-build contracting to speed delivery and reduce costs.

"For more than 80 years, the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy has been the pride of Long Island. As one of America's five services academies, USMMA is a pathway for young Americans to serve our country and contribute to our maritime security. I'm proud to join Rep. Garbarino and my colleagues in working together for Long Island and leading this bipartisan bill to strengthen Long Island's tradition of producing the best Midshipmen and mariners in the world," said Rep. Gillen.

"To ensure the Merchant Marine Academy continues to play a

pivotal role in shaping the next generation of maritime and national security leaders, Congress must invest in its infrastructure, which has languished since the mid-20th century. Doing so is essential to providing Midshipmen, who will go on to serve America around the globe, with the education and hands-on training they need to excel in critical industries like marine transportation and defense,” said Rep. LaLota. “Upgrading these facilities will strengthen the Academy’s ability to prepare top-tier officers and ensure it remains a premier institution for the nation’s future maritime leaders.”

“The U.S. Merchant Marine Academy is a national treasure that has been neglected for decades. It is time to restore it to its former glory!” said Rep. Suozzi.

Rep. Garbarino has served on the USMMA Board of Visitors since joining Congress and has been a leading advocate for modernizing the Academy’s campus and supporting the next generation of maritime leaders.

The full text of the bill can be [found here](#).

**Secretary of Defense
Emphasizes Lethality,
Deterrence on Guam**



From Lt. Cmdr. Michelle Tucker, March 28, 2025

ANDERSEN AIR FORCE BASE, Guam – Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth arrived on Guam March 27 to meet with military and civilian leaders and speak with troops – his first visit to Guam since his January confirmation.

The visit was the second stop on Hegseth’s Pacific engagement tour, which began in Hawaii and will continue from Guam to the Philippines and Japan. Hegseth focused on strengthening alliances and bolstering warrior ethos among service members, further strengthening the United States’ deterrence posture in the region.

More than 600 service members from military commands across Guam gathered for a troop call at Andersen Air Force Base to kick off the visit. Hegseth praised them for their mission contributions, noting Guam’s strategic location in the Indo-Pacific region, and charged them to increase lethality and readiness.

“What unites us is who we are and our purpose as Americans,” Hegseth said. “We are in the business of warfighting. You are warfighters on behalf of our nation and we are [going to] make sure you have a military built and prepared for that fight ... American leadership ensures the free world is protected – to advance American interests and the interests of our allies.”

The visit fell one day after the 80th anniversary of end of the Battle of Iwo Jima that occurred just 750 miles north northwest of Guam. During the troop call, Hegseth recognized a group of seven Iwo Jima veterans who traveled to Guam to attend commemoration events. He thanked them for their courage and fortitude, and for paving the way for Americans in the Pacific.

Commander, Joint Region Marianas Navy Rear Adm. Brent DeVore greeted Hegseth upon arrival along with other senior military leaders on island.

“The Secretary’s visit underscored the Department of Defense’s commitment to the security of Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, as well as the entire Micronesia region’s strategic importance to the Pacific,” DeVore said. “We highlighted our efforts and contributions to strategic deterrence, demonstrating U.S. strength and daily preparedness – and tangible examples of ongoing work in cyber security, missile defense, our construction projects throughout Guam, CNMI, and the COFA states, and infrastructure resilience.”

“We all emphasized the interconnectedness between the Department of Defense efforts and our local communities, in all we do,” he added.

During a military roundtable, Hegseth received briefs from installation commanders and key leaders throughout the region detailing capabilities and future growth on Guam. Commander, 36th Wing, Andersen Air Force Base Air Force Brig. Gen. Thomas

Palenske stressed to Hegseth the importance of the work the team is doing on Guam.

“Andersen Air Force Base is incredibly vital to the mission in the Indo-Pacific,” Palenske said. “Our strategic location and the exceptional readiness of our personnel reinforce our commitment to deterrence and combat readiness in the region. The capabilities showcased and discussed during this visit not only empower our forces but also strengthen our alliances and ensure we stand ready to respond to any challenge.”

The “Island Knights” of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 25 flew Hegseth in an MH-60S Sea Hawk helicopter for an aerial tour of the island. During the tour, Naval Facilities Engineering Command Marianas Commanding Officer Navy Capt. Troy Brown briefed Hegseth on current and future construction and resiliency improvements on Guam including the Glass Breakwater, which was damaged during Typhoon Mawar. The breakwater is critical to harbor protection and the supply chain for the entire island.

Finally, Guam Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Gov. Arnold Palacios, and Guam Rep. James Moylan met with Hegseth to discuss military-civilian partnership from a local perspective.

“Our goal is achieve peace through strength,” Hegseth said. “By putting America first, that means working with partners and allies throughout the region, reestablishing deterrence and building capabilities right here. These islands are the tip of America’s spear in the Pacific.

“I want to be very clear to everyone in this room,” Hegseth continued. “... Any attack against these islands is an attack against the U.S. We recognize that, we understand that, and we are committed to that.”

CMS Launches Publication on Renewing the U.S. Commercial Maritime Industry



Dr. Steven Wills, left, John D. McCown, Brent Sadler and William McDonald at the Center for Maritime Strategy book launch event. *Photo credit: James Peterson*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Center for Maritime Strategy (CMS) held the Washington-area launch of its first major publication, “Returning from Ebb Tide: Renewing the United States Commercial Maritime Industry,” on March 26 at the Arlington headquarters of the Navy League of the United States.

The book is a thorough analysis of the problems facing merchant mariners and contains recommendations to strengthen

American commercial shipping.

Speakers at the event included three of the book's 10 contributing authors: Brent Sadler, senior research fellow, Naval Warfare and Advanced Technology, at the Heritage Foundation's Allison Center for National Security, and the new nominee to head the U.S. Maritime Administration; John D. McCown, non-resident senior fellow at CMS; and William McDonald, former director of the Office of Sealift Support at MARAD.

Admiral James Foggo, U.S. Navy (retired), said the book was an early focus of CMS and is needed because of how China is dominating commercial shipping, with 50% of the commercial fleet to America's 1%.

The decline of the U.S. commercial fleet has several causes, he said, including the Peace Dividend after World War II, the end of industry subsidies under President Reagan and globalization that led to outsourcing.



The book will also have a launch event at Sea-Air-Space 2025.

Photo credit: James Peterson

“Now, the fleet is a shadow of its former self,” he said. “...We can ill afford to idly sit by and observe the status quo.”

Sea-Air-Space Launch

CMS will also hold a book launch and discussion at Sea-Air-Space 2025, on Tuesday, April 8 from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Editor Dr. Steve Wills will lead a discussion with the authors on how our nation’s commercial maritime capability declined over the past several decades and how to resurrect the United States’ critically important maritime sector.

Confirmed speakers for the Sea-Air-Space event include Sadler and MCown as well as Vice Admiral Dee Mewbourne, U.S. Navy (ret.), CEO at Quadrant Nuclear Industries, and Dr. Brad Martin, senior policy researcher at RAND Corporation.

DON Authorizes Attendance at Sea-Air-Space 2025 for Military, Civilian Personnel



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 25, 2025

ARLINGTON, Va. – Travel for the Navy League’s Sea-Air-Space Symposium has been authorized for all Department of Navy military speakers, moderators, and panelists, and attendance at the event has been approved for all National Capital Region (local) Navy federal civilian employees and uniformed military personnel.

A memo released by acting Under Secretary of the Navy Terrence Emmert, dated 20 March 2025, says, “I approve the Department of the Navy’s attendance at the Navy League’s Sea-Air-Space Symposium, 6-9 April 2025, at National Harbor, Maryland.”

Sea-Air-Space, the nation’s largest maritime national security symposium, is critical, as it “provides a platform for the professional development of Department of the Navy personnel on the latest developments in naval warfare, as well as an opportunity for Navy engagement with representatives from a broad cross-section of government, industry, academia, and the

international community.” (GENADMIN released 24 MARCH 2025).

The Navy League of the United States, the host for Sea-Air-Space, is offering federal active-duty and civilian employees admission and transportation to the event, as well as one complimentary meal event. The Navy League also offers them discounted parking and meals for purchase at a discounted rate. Local bus services to and from the Gaylord National Harbor is also available for all federal civilian employees and uniformed military. Please see website, www.seaairspace.org for further details. Attendees not opting for these services are responsible for their own commuting costs to the event.

Newly confirmed 79th Secretary of the Navy, the Honorable John C. Phelan, will address Sea-Air-Space attendees on his priorities for the Department, including ways to revitalize U.S. shipbuilding, strengthen warfighting culture, and recruit America’s best and brightest. Top speakers also include acting Commandant of the United States Coast Guard Admiral Kevin Lunday, Acting Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Jim Kilby, and Commandant of the Marine Corps General Eric Smith.

To register for Sea-Air-Space, click [here](#).