

The U.S. Maritime Administration



Association of Pacific Ports Winter Conference

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By

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Discussion Topics



U.S. Department of Transportation

U.S. Maritime Administration

Priorities and Programs

Stakeholder Engagement



U.S. Department of Transportation Priorities

SAFETY

INFRASTRUCTURE

INNOVATION

EFFICIENCY



Leadership



Secretary Sean Duffy
U.S. Department of
Transportation



Stephen M. Carmel,
Administrator
U.S. Maritime Administration



U.S. Department of Transportation Maritime Administration



MISSION

Foster, promote, and develop the maritime industry of the United States to meet the nation's economic and security needs.



Gateway Offices



Regional Presence and Engagement

Ensure clear and efficient communication between MARAD HQ and the Marine Transportation System (MTS) stakeholders.



Key Responsibilities

Coordinate policy, infrastructure, and funding initiatives to effectively meet regional and agency goals.



Managing Relationships

Building and maintaining positive relationships with stakeholders is a key responsibility.



Expertise and Program Execution

Support daily operations to ensure alignment with HQ goals and strategies.



USDOT Priorities → MARAD Programs

SAFETY



Strategic Sealift

The Mission

MARAD provides timely and scalable strategic sealift capabilities to meet Department of War (DOW) sealift requirements, including during wars or national emergencies.

Federal Sealift

The Ready Reserve Force (RRF) consists of 44 federally-owned vessels that provide the capability to "surge" the rapid deployment of U.S. military forces in support of U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM).

Commercial Sealift

The Maritime Security Program (MSP) provides access to commercially-owned and operated vessels that support both surge sustainment cargoes.





Strategic Seaports

Economic Security

Commercial Strategic Seaports provide the military with a cost-effective way to move military cargo by utilizing existing commercial seaport infrastructure for emergency military deployments while minimizing disruption to commerce.

National Security

The Strategic Seaports Program facilitates potential short-notice military deployments, including during a war or national emergency by providing a framework for planning and readiness reporting.





Safe Marine Transportation System (MTS)

- Maritime industry sought near-miss program for ~20 years
“Near Miss” – A precursor to a more serious incident
- MARAD and industry gathered input on program design from SOCP, USCG, BTS, BSEE, others
- Initial program design: A confidential near-miss safety data sharing program for the maritime industry
- Program aims to:
 - Develop an industrywide source of precursor safety data that can be analyzed to identify key factors to prevent more serious events
 - Share results with industry stakeholders to support continuous safety improvement efforts
 - Update standards for maritime near-miss reporting (e.g., ASTM F-3256)





DOT Internal Counter-Trafficking Steering Committee

Purpose

- Coordinate and lead efforts to combat human trafficking within the transportation sector.
- Advise the Secretary of Transportation on best practices, policies, and enforcement across all modes of transport to identify and stop traffickers and protect victims.

MARAD's Role

- Public Awareness and Education
 - Transportation Leaders Against Human Trafficking Maritime Awareness Materials
 - Blue Lighting Initiative
- Prevention, Identification, and Reporting
 - Maritime Sector Counter-Trafficking Toolkit



FEMA Port Security Grants Program (PSGP)

Port Security Grants

- The PSGP provides funds to state, local, and private sector maritime partners to support increased port-wide risk management and protect critical surface transportation infrastructure from acts of terrorism, major disasters, and other emergencies.
- **Port Security Grant Program**
- Key Areas

National Priorities

- Enhancing Cybersecurity
- Enhancing Protection of Soft Targets and Crowded Places
- Enduring Priorities
- Planning, Training and Awareness, Equipment and Capital Projects, Exercises





USDOT Priorities → MARAD Programs

INFRASTRUCTURE



USDOT Navigator Website

A resource to help communities understand
how to

§ **Apply** for grants

§ **Plan** for, and

§ **Deliver**

Transformative infrastructure projects and
services.

Go to: www.transportation.gov/navigator





Major U.S. DOT Port Infrastructure Programs

FY 2026 BUILD NOFO

- The full notice of opportunity (NOFO) for the FY 2026 for Local and Regional Project Assistance Program Grants under National Infrastructure Investments (aka BUILD) was released on 15 December 2025 (<https://www.transportation.gov/BUILDgrants/NOFO>)
- Applications are due February 24, 2026. The program is codified at 49 U.S.C. 6702.
- Funding \$1.5 billion in FY 2026 IIJA funds
- Award Sizes:
 - \$1 million for rural capital projects
 - \$5 million for urban capital projects
 - Planning projects do not have a minimum award size
 - Maximum Award Size \$25 million
- Ports are eligible applicants.



U.S. Marine Highway Program (USMHP)

- Through the development and promotion of marine highway transportation, the **USMHP** aims to relieve landside congestion and generate other public benefits by increasing the efficiency of the U.S. surface transportation system.
- The **USMHP** works closely with public and private organizations to:
 - Develop and broaden marine highway service options and facilitate their further integration into the U.S. surface transportation system, especially where water-based transport is the most efficient, effective, and sustainable option.
 - Highlight the benefits, increase public awareness, and promote waterways as a viable (in some cases, a superior) alternative to “landside” shipping and transportation options.



USMHP Designated Routes

- The Secretary may designate a route as a marine highway transportation route, or modify a designation, if the route:
 - provides a coordinated and capable alternative to landside transportation;
 - mitigates or relieves landside congestion;
 - promotes marine highway transportation; or
 - uses vessels documented in statute, and
- A route designation or modification can be requested (“sponsored”) by:
 - the government of a State or territory;
 - a metropolitan planning organization;
 - a port authority;
 - a non-Federal navigation district; or
 - a Tribal government



35 designated Marine Highway Routes, reaching 41 states, the District of Columbia, and five U.S. territories; spanning over 27,000 miles



USMHP Grant Program

- USMHP grants are awarded on a competitive basis to projects on designated U.S. Marine Highway Routes that **provide a coordinated and capable alternative to landside transportation or that promote marine highway transportation.**
- Eligible applicants include:
 - State, a political subdivision of a State, or a local government;
 - United States metropolitan planning organization;
 - United States port authority;
 - Tribal government; or
 - **U.S. private sector operator** of marine highway projects or private sector owners of facilities, **including an Alaska Native Corporation**, with an endorsement letter from a **U.S. Marine Highway Route Sponsor**.



Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP)

Purpose

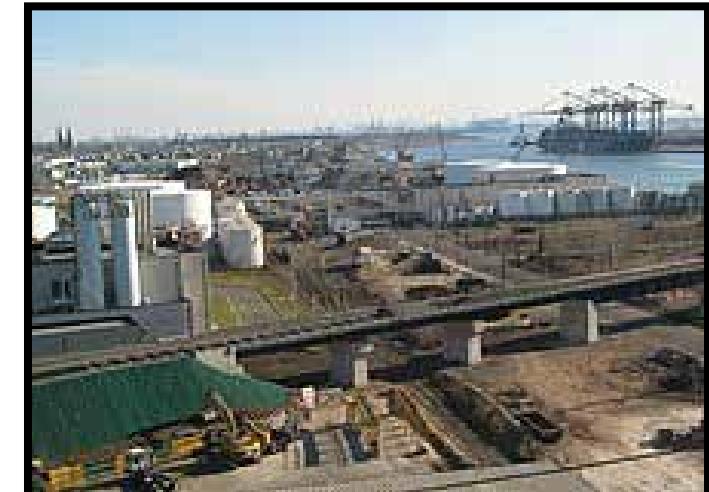
- Supports the efficient movement of commerce upon which our economy relies.

Discretionary Grant Program

- Helps to strengthen, modernize, and improve our country's maritime systems and gateway ports
- Competitively award

Funding

- \$2.25 billion was provided through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act over five years (2022-2026).
- Funding is also provided through annual appropriations.





Helpful Hints For Grants



The Key
to an “attractive” application is crafting an effective, detailed, and comprehensive story that demonstrates clear funding need, commitment, and impact.



Write a Compelling Story
Some programs may require an applicant to articulate the expected outcomes or impact the project would have on the community. This could also include examples of community support or desire for the project. Consider showing alignment to stated priorities of the program, agency, and/or Department.



Communicate Impact
Some programs may require an applicant to articulate the potential impact of the proposed project. Consider quantifying statements as much as possible or providing data points specific to the community.



USDOT Priorities → MARAD Programs

INNOVATION

EFFICIENCY



Maritime Innovation

MARAD administers unique programs that support maritime innovation

- Maritime Environmental and Technical Assistance (META) program
 - Annually funded since 2010
- US Center for Maritime Innovation (USCMI)
 - Focused on US Maritime Competitiveness, Operations, Energy, and Resilience
- Innovation and research involves broad collaboration/partnership with government agencies, industry, academia, and NGOs
- Actively support US Government maritime innovation initiatives/programs
- Member of several federal and international interagency working groups focused on maritime innovation
- Support other DOT modal efforts





The Maritime Industrial Base

“President Trump’s plan to reclaim maritime dominance starts with rebuilding America’s shipyards.....this program will help America to build big, beautiful ships again to counter Chinese competition and maintain freedom on the seas.”

USDOT Secretary Sean Duffy

Small Shipyard Grant Program

- Modernize, increase efficiency
- Investment in maritime infrastructure & workforce
- American shipyards = 400,000 jobs /\$37 billion GDP
- \$8.75 Million in Grants to Revitalize U.S. Shipyards awarded on July 21, 2025





Maritime Workforce Development

Recruit

Train

Retain



Entry
Roadblocks

Marketing
&
Outreach

Increasing
Mariner Supply

Quality of
Life

Pay
&
Incentives



More Cargo

More Ships

More Mariners



Stakeholder Engagement

- Expand Maritime Industrial Base
- Supply Chain Resiliency
- Emergency Response
- Port Readiness

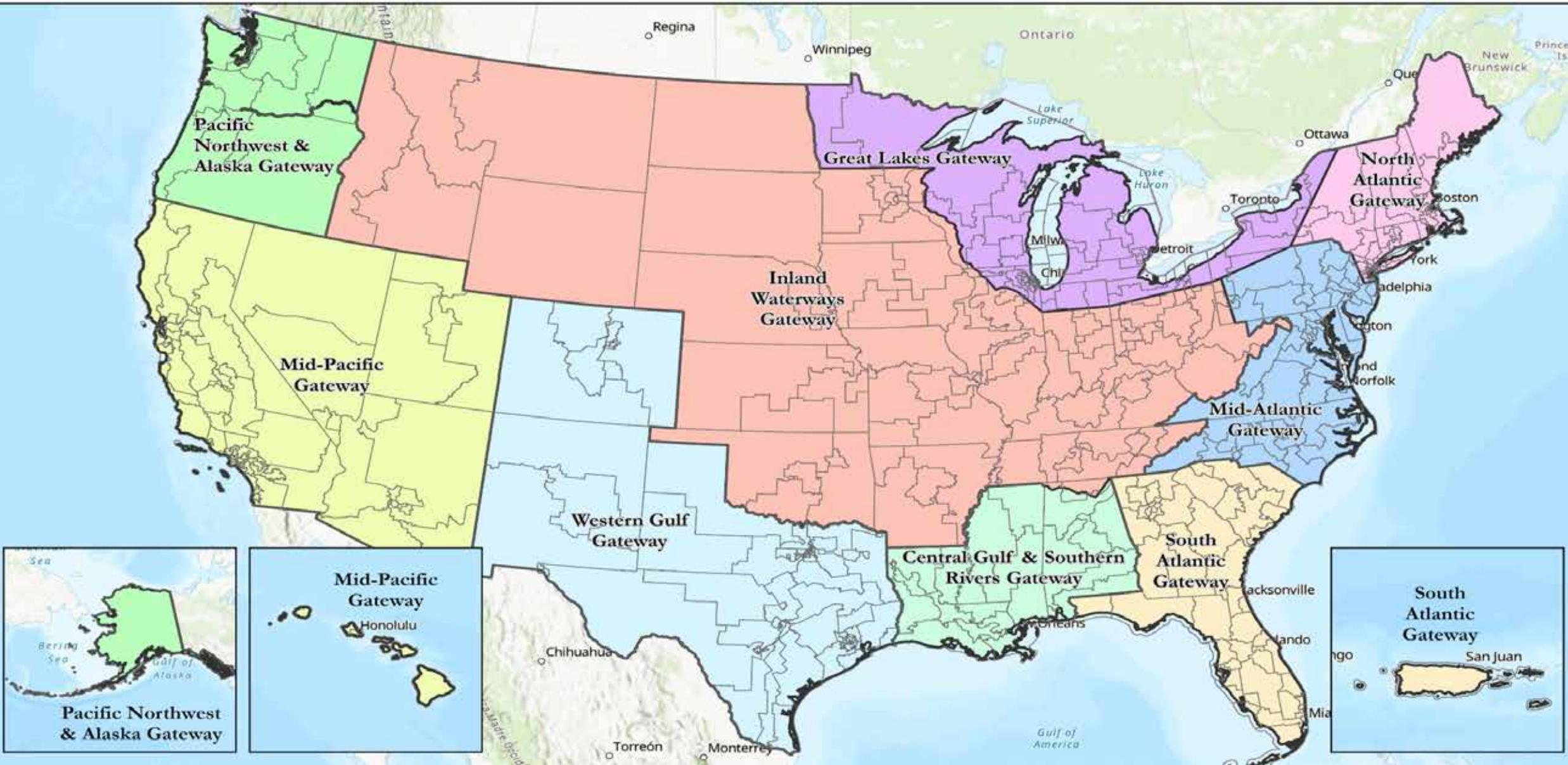




U.S. Department of Transportation
Maritime Administration

Regional Presence and Engagement

With Congressional District Overlay (119th Congress)





Presence and Engagement

Gateway Directors engage with local stakeholders to promote economic growth, regulatory compliance, maritime security, and emergency preparedness.



Strategy,
Policy,
Initiatives

1. Situational Awareness
2. Meaningful Engagement and Positive Outcomes



1. Aligns activities with Agency priorities
2. Provides Technical Expertise to stakeholders
3. Facilitates communication & Coord.

1. Critical Industry Insight
2. Communicate Challenges, Opportunities



1. Expand Maritime Industrial Base
2. Grow the Fleet (NDRF & RRF)
3. Port Infrastructure Development
4. Shipbuilding and Repair
5. Mariner Education and Training
6. Supply Chain Safety

- Port Authorities, Terminal Operators, Railroads, Ocean Carriers, Truckers
- Congressional Outreach
- Maritime Education State, Maritime Academies, Centers of Excellence, Non-profits
- Maritime Labor Organizations and Associated Interested Parties
- Ports, grant recipients & related entities – to include unsuccessful & potential applicants
- Inter-agency Partners
- State and local government entities to include DOTs, MPOs, Navigation districts, and public ports
- Maritime-related associations
- Maritime Security Public and Private Stakeholders



Key Responsibilities

Port Infrastructure/ Grant Assistance

Develop projects in the region that promote overall economic growth, mitigate highway and port congestion, and support both large and small American shipbuilding companies.

Intermodal Outreach

Outreach and engagement with Port Authorities, Terminal Operators, Carriers, Rail, Private Sector, local, state and federal partners, etc.

Maritime Security

Participate in Area Maritime Security Committee and Port Readiness Committee meetings held by USCG

Emergency Preparedness

Engage on federal maritime emergency preparedness issues in the region.

Strategic Seaports

Assess the readiness of our Strategic Commercial Seaports

Supply Chain Resiliency

Report supply chain impacts and port closures in times of emergency

Contact Information

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