



U.S. Committee on the Marine Transportation System
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Committee Issues National Strategy For U.S. Maritime Transportation System

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Committee on the Maritime Transportation System (CMTS), a cabinet-level, interagency committee, announced the release of its strategic policy framework, the National Strategy for the Marine Transportation System: A Framework for Action. This document was approved on July 10, 2008 and is designed to address the most pressing needs of America's Maritime Transportation System.

The framework includes more than 30 actions in five priority areas including capacity, safety and security, environmental stewardship, resilience and reliability and finance and economics, that will help address signs of strain within the nation's otherwise thriving Marine Transportation System (MTS).

"The Marine Transportation System is crucial to our national economy," said Maritime Administrator Sean T. Connaughton, chair of the CMTS Coordinating Board. "This strategy provides much-needed coordination and direction for government agencies and for all stakeholders." The Coordinating Board directs much of the day-to-day work of the CMTS and develops recommendations for the CMTS cabinet-level principals.

The U.S. MTS is complex, decentralized, and composed of an array of interdependent components that link with our country's navigable waterways, ports, harbors and landside access points. Total freight volumes in the U.S. are expected to increase by 50 percent by the year 2020 while international cargo container traffic is expected to double from 1998 levels, pushing the capacity limits of our ports and waterways. Significant rises in commuter ferry operations, recreational boating traffic and cruise ship operations are also forecast.

"Maritime commerce is a critical part of our economy accounting for approximately 8.4 million American jobs and nearly \$2 trillion in seaport-related businesses alone," states retired Navy Vice Admiral Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Ph.D., Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and NOAA Administrator. "The National Strategy is a framework for maintaining and advancing the nation's standing as the global leader in maritime trade."

Steven L. Stockton, Director of Civil Works for the US Army Corps of Engineers added, "The infrastructure that makes up the MTS has been faithfully serving its intended purpose, some of it for more than 100 years. It is now showing its age. We owe it to the American people to protect and invest in an energy efficient and environmentally friendly means of moving the people and commerce of this country. The CMTS National Strategy for the MTS provides a vision to do just that."

The movement of people and goods through U.S. ports and the MTS touches 50 separate federal government programs. The creation of the CMTS, as directed by the December 2004 Ocean Action Plan, facilitated interagency cooperation and focus on MTS issues.

"The level of collaboration among participating agencies was extraordinary if not historic," said U.S. Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Thad W. Allen. "The CMTS is pledged to see this through to sustain and improve the nation's vital Marine Transportation System."

The CMTS is a federal interagency partnership that was created by the President to improve federal MTS coordination and policies and to recommend strategies and implement plans to maintain and improve the Marine Transportation System.

The CMTS is chaired by Mary E. Peters, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation. The National Strategy for the MTS and information about other activities of the CMTS can be viewed at www.cmts.gov.

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