

MARITIME ADMINISTRATION

STRATEGIC PLAN

FY 2022 – 2026

NAVIGATING A STRONGER FUTURE



MARAD – Navigating a Stronger Future

Contents

MESSAGE FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR	3
LIST OF ACRONYMS	4
INTRODUCTION	5
STRATEGIC PLAN OVERVIEW	8
ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE	9
SAFETY	15
ECONOMIC STRENGTH AND GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS	18
EQUITY	22
CLIMATE & SUSTAINABILITY	25
TRANSFORMATION	28

MARAD – Navigating a Stronger Future

Message From the Administrator

I am pleased to present the Maritime Administration’s Strategic Plan, Navigating a Stronger Future, for fiscal years (FY) 2022-2026. This Plan reflects the Maritime Administration (MARAD) strategies that will continue to foster, develop and promote a maritime industry and merchant marine second to none. Our nation relies on U.S.-flag vessels and American mariners to provide essential sealift capabilities during national emergencies and to meet strategic sealift needs during times of war. MARAD is committed to ensuring the overall health of the U.S. Merchant Marine and recognizes that a strong U.S. maritime industry is critical to America’s national security strategy.



Our Priorities

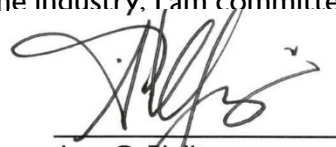
We have established four priority areas of focus to help achieve our goals for a World Class U.S. maritime transportation system:

- 1. Support and grow America’s merchant fleet and the mariners that crew it.*
- 2. Recapitalize sealift in our Nation’s National Defense Reserve Fleet.*
- 3. Work towards realizing a net zero decarbonization of the maritime industry.*
- 4. Support the USMMA as a world class educational institution.*

Our Nation’s maritime industry continues to face significant challenges, including a marginally-sized internationally trading commercial fleet, and an aging Ready Reserve Force (RRF) that MARAD maintains for national defense and humanitarian needs. We also have a mariner shortage to adequately crew these ships during a full-scale national emergency. MARAD leaders have exercised new and existing authorities to close these gaps. This effort includes: adding more ships to the U.S.-flag through the Cable Security Program and Tanker Security Program—both

of which create new billets for our mariners and enhance national security; recapitalizing our RRF; making critical investments to address the urgent and long-standing infrastructure challenges at the United States Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA or Academy); and building five new state-of-the-art training vessels for the state maritime academies—the first of which was delivered in September of this year. MARAD is also continuing efforts to ensure that maritime work environments are workplaces where every American drawn to service at sea is respected and can succeed on the basis of their skills and professionalism. In addition, MARAD now leads the way among Federal agencies for port infrastructure investment and is dedicated to achieving environmental sustainability across the maritime industry.

This plan establishes the strategic priorities and framework necessary to meet our mission in today’s environment and shape the future of the maritime industry. I am committed to continuing the good work that has already begun.



Ann C. Phillips
Maritime Administrator

MARAD – Navigating a Stronger Future

List of Acronyms

AIS	Automatic Identification System
ASTM	American Society for Testing Materials
BTS	Bureau of Transportation Statistics
CCF	Capital Construction Fund
CMTS	Committee on the Marine Transportation System
CoE	Centers of Excellence
CRF	Construction Reserve Fund
CSF	Cable Security Fleet
DOD	Department of Defense
DOE	Department of Energy
DOT	Department of Transportation
EMBARC	Every Mariner Builds a Respectful Culture
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
GDA	Geospatial Data Act
HBCU	Historically Black Colleges and Universities
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
MAO	Maritime Administration Order
MARAD	Maritime Administration
META	Maritime Environmental and Technical Assistance
MSP	Maritime Security Program
MTS	Marine Transportation System
NDRF	National Defense Reserve Fleet
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NPRN	National Port Readiness Network
NSMV	National Security Multi-Mission Vessel
OCIO	Office of the Chief Information Officer
PIDP	Port Infrastructure Development Program
PNT	Position, Navigation and Timing
RD&T	Research, Development, & Technology
RFI	Request for Information
RRF	Ready Reserve Force
SAPR	Sexual Assault, Prevention, and Response
SASH	Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment
SMA	State Maritime Academies
SOCP	Ship Operations Cooperative Program
TEU	Twenty-foot equivalent unit
Title XI	Maritime Guaranteed Loan Program
TSP	Tanker Security Program
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
US DOS	U.S. Department of State
USMMA	United States Merchant Marine Academy
USCG	United States Coast Guard
USMH	U.S. Marine Highways
VISA	Voluntary Intermodal Sealift Agreement

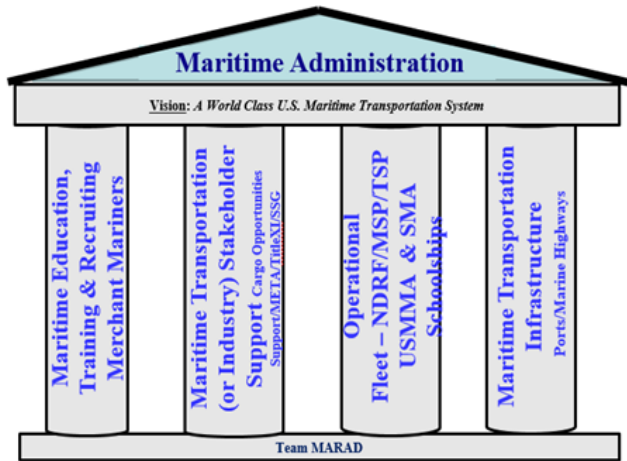
MARAD – Navigating a Stronger Future

Introduction

The past decade has brought about momentous change for the Nation and for MARAD. World events like Covid-19, and climate related challenges such as sea level rise, flooding, and increases in severe weather events have brought new attention to the Marine Transportation System (MTS). Whether it is vessels anchored offshore for weeks waiting to offload at our Nation’s ports, disruptions in the supply chain, or the devastation of shoreline and coastal communities from increasingly more dangerous storms, the importance of the MTS is now more visible to the public.

Our Mission:
To foster, promote, and develop the maritime industry of the United States to meet the Nation's economic and security needs.

Federal responsibility for supporting the maritime industry is diverse. The U.S. Committee on the Marine Transportation System (CMTS) identified over 30 agencies, bureaus, White House offices, and Federal interagency organizations with at least some role directly related to the U.S. marine transportation system. The Maritime Administration (MARAD) is one of those agencies with a more prominent and substantial role.



MARAD is the agency within the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) that supports the United States commercial maritime industry and the country’s national security objectives, working closely with other civilian federal departments and agencies and the Department of Defense—which funds some of MARAD’s programs.

MARAD’s programs also support our Nation’s Marine Transportation System, educate and train our U.S. mariners, enhance our Nation’s economic and

national security and disaster response through commercial and military sea lift, and support a globally competitive U.S. shipbuilding industry.

The agency’s mission places MARAD in a unique position relative to other DOT modal administrations. MARAD is not a military organization but maintains and manages government assets for the military to use in time of need. Roughly, one-third of MARAD’s FY 2023 budget was from the U.S. Department of Navy to support national defense needs through MARAD’s strategic sealift programs. Accordingly, MARAD and its programs play a key role in meeting strategic sealift requirements for the Department of Defense (DOD).

MARAD also has the statutory authority, delegated from DOT, to support mariner education and training. MARAD has direct responsibility for operation of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA), one of five Federal service academies in which graduates can receive a commission into one of the six branches of the U.S. armed services. Additionally, MARAD

MARAD – Navigating a Stronger Future

supports six state institutions designated as state maritime academies (SMA). To support the SMAs MARAD is recapitalizing their training ship fleet with the construction of five new ships known as National Security Multi-mission Vessels (NSMV). The first of these modern training platforms, the TS EMPIRE STATE, was delivered to the State University of New York Maritime College in September of 2023. The remaining ships will be delivered between 2024 and 2026. To strengthen MARAD’s role as a federal facilitator and advocate for the nation’s maritime education and training programs, MARAD established the Centers of Excellence for Domestic Maritime Workforce Training and Education (CoE) Program, which recognizes educational and training institutions, other than Federal and State Maritime Academies, that support the needs of the domestic maritime community.

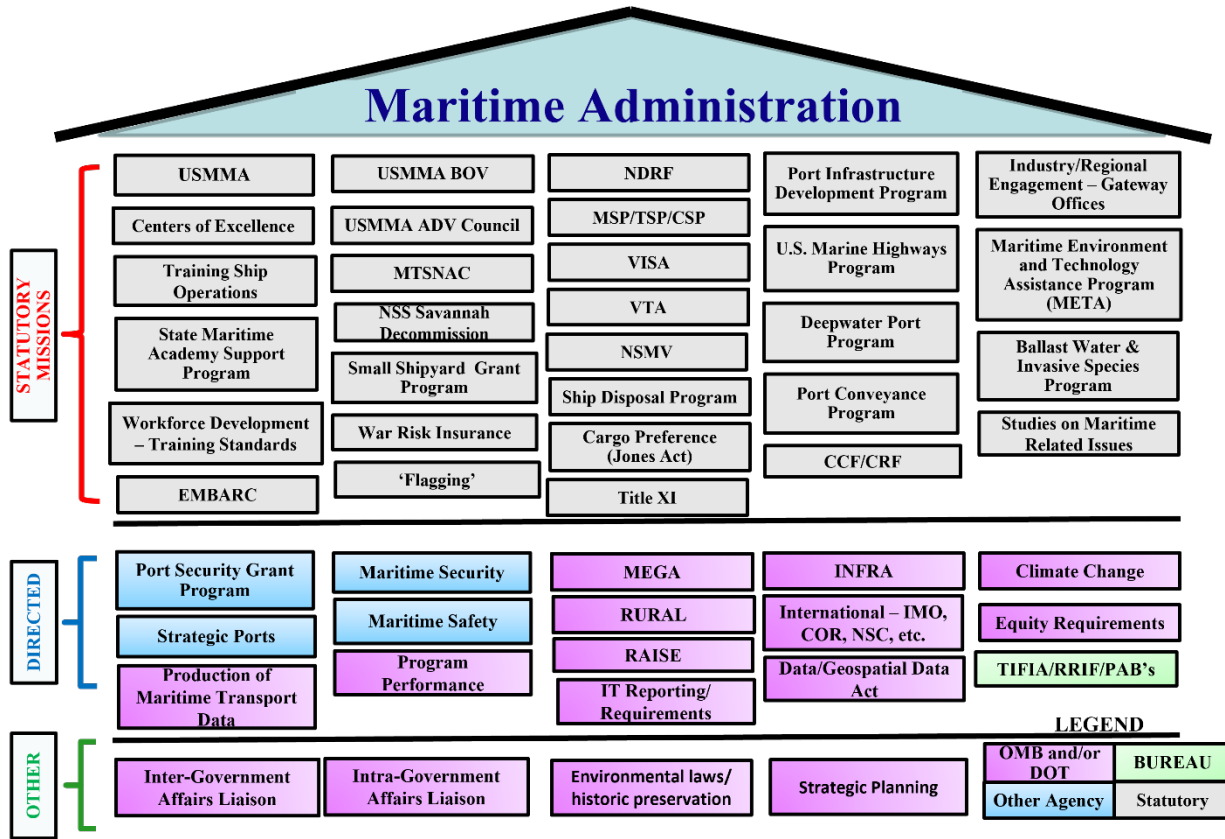
MARAD also plays a distinct and vital role in the U.S. supply chain. Our Nation has a vast network of navigable waterways, including rivers, bays, channels, coasts, the Great Lakes, open-ocean routes and the Saint Lawrence Seaway System. MARAD’s programs aim to leverage these resources seamlessly with the other landside modes of surface transportation. These same harbors enable our Nation’s largest ports to thrive and serve as gateways to virtually all our overseas trade in terms of tonnage.

MARAD continues to support the Jones Act, the U.S. commercial fleet, and the highly trained mariners who crew those vessels. A principal benefit of the Jones Act is the support it provides for our commercial shipbuilding industrial base. MARAD fully leverages its existing authorities and programs, such as its Federal Ship Financing Program (Title XI)¹, to support commercial shipbuilding as the Nation pivots from using fossil fuels to renewable energy sources.

Aside from shipbuilding, several MARAD programs support the Administration’s primary goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions nationally to achieve a net-zero economy by 2050, by providing critical incentives for maritime industry stakeholders. These incentives include offering grants for marine highways and port infrastructure development, providing loan guarantees for U.S.-built vessels, and supporting necessary innovative research and demonstration of low carbon vessel and port projects to maintain a safe, efficient, and competitive US maritime transportation system.

¹ The Federal Ship Financing Program (commonly referred to as Title XI) was established by the Merchant Marine Act of 1936 (46 U.S.C. Chapter 537) and provides for a full faith and credit guarantee by the U.S. Government to promote the growth and modernization of the U.S. Merchant Marine and U.S. shipyards.

MARAD – Navigating a Stronger Future



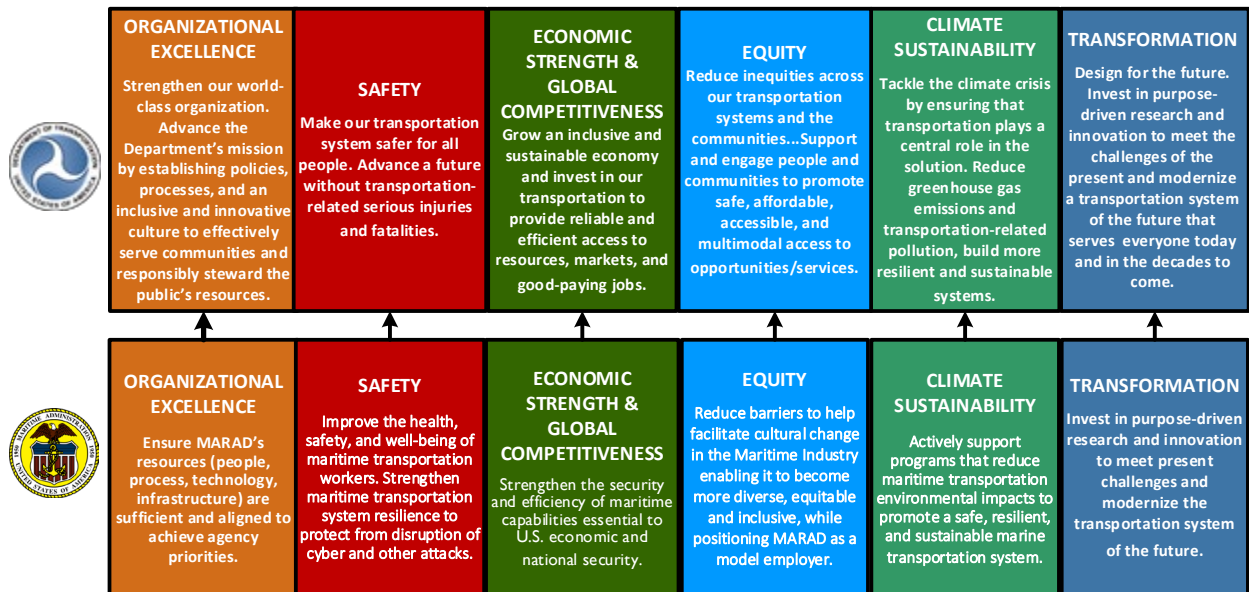
MARAD – Navigating a Stronger Future

STRATEGIC PLAN OVERVIEW

As an operating administration within DOT, MARAD’s strategic goals are aligned with the Department’s strategic goals. A primary MARAD responsibility within DOT is to support and develop the Nation’s marine transportation system so that it is sufficient to move all domestic and a substantial portion of foreign international waterborne commerce to accommodate economic growth and provide military sealift and humanitarian aid response during national emergencies. This responsibility includes both our landside infrastructure and the ability to seamlessly move cargo between the water and other surface modes, as well as our sealift capacity to efficiently move goods from port to port. Given MARAD’s strong national security role, MARAD also must ensure that the Nation can educate and train U.S. citizen mariners to crew the ships that carry our foreign and domestic commerce.

One of our Nation’s key pillars for moving domestic cargo is the U.S. shipbuilding and repair industrial base. We would have no U.S. merchant marine without it, nor would we have the ability to adequately support the U.S. military during a large-scale contingency operation. Finally, MARAD connects with maritime industry stakeholders to support the vision of a world class U.S. maritime transportation system.

The FY 2022-2026 Department of Transportation Strategic Plan sets the direction for DOT to provide safe, efficient, convenient, and sustainable transportation choices through five Strategic Goals. To support accomplishment of the DOT Strategic Goals, and to achieve the MARAD mission in support of the U.S. marine transportation system, the following framework illustrates how MARAD’s Strategic Goals are aligned with the larger Department Strategic Goals.



MARAD – Navigating a Stronger Future

1. ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Ensure MARAD’s resources (people, process, technology, infrastructure) are sufficient and aligned to achieve agency priorities.

MARAD’s goal for Organizational Excellence has taken on new importance as our legislative mandates have expanded in the past decade. The workforce is the core of our success, and our diverse talents are the reason we succeed in our mission. Workforce alignment and opportunities for training and cross-training are vital to realizing our mission. Technology and employee recruitment and retention are also vital to organizational excellence.



I.1 OBJECTIVE: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Recruit, maintain, and develop a knowledgeable, diverse, and engaged MARAD workforce to best support and accomplish the agency’s missions.

Investing in workforce development is necessary for ensuring that MARAD can meet the challenges of the maritime industry. MARAD recognizes that attracting and retaining a diverse and talented workforce is an important driver of organizational excellence. Leveraging opportunities to develop talent, exploring ways to build and retain institutional knowledge, and increasing leadership capacity throughout the agency are all key to developing the workforce that will make MARAD successful.

MARAD will complete the following strategies advancing the objective for workforce development:

- Strategy I.1.1: Develop MARAD’s 5-year Human Capital Operations Plan for 2023 to 2026.
- Strategy I.1.2: Collaborate with MARAD offices and USMMA to set staffing targets for entry/mid-career positions to ensure sustainable organization structure.
- Strategy I.1.3: Increase MARAD’s brand awareness and enhance marketing efforts.
- Strategy I.1.4: Support diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in MARAD’s hiring and retention practices.
- Strategy I.1.5: Actively recruit from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), community colleges, and trade/technical schools for future talent to support the U.S. maritime industry.
- Strategy I.1.6: Develop career pathways that support long-term employee growth and retention.

MARAD – Navigating a Stronger Future

I.2 OBJECTIVE: CUSTOMER SERVICE

Collaborate, coordinate, and communicate with transparency to ensure that optimal customer service is provided to both internal and external MARAD stakeholders.

Maintaining mechanisms for stakeholder communication and feedback is key to MARAD’s ability to provide effective government services. Ensuring that information about MARAD programs is accessible, transparent, and easy to use is essential to our mission to promote the U.S. maritime industry. In addition, stakeholder feedback is an important indicator of whether MARAD services are being delivered effectively. MARAD’s Office of Congressional and Public Affairs will maintain open and responsive lines of communication with customers from both inside and outside of government. Internally within MARAD we will ensure our teammates have multiple venues to provide their feedback on MARAD services and support.

MARAD will complete the following strategies advancing the objective for customer service:

- Strategy I.2.1: Improve transparency and promote information and data sharing by increasing public access to data and data analysis, publications, and visualization tools.
- Strategy I.2.2: Assess customer requests and feedback and provide timely responses.
- Strategy I.2.3: Conduct regular stakeholder outreach to better understand how MARAD programs can support the maritime industry.
- Strategy I.2.4: Support the efficient and effective distribution of Federal transportation funding.
- Strategy I.2.5: Respond to congressional requests and requirements and audit findings in a timely manner.
- Strategy I.2.6: Strengthen our internal customer service support to the MARAD team.

OBJECTIVE: I.3 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND CYBERSECURITY MANAGEMENT

Ensure MARAD’s IT needs are met through the timely identification of requirements and in accordance with departmental cybersecurity guidance.

MARAD’s mission to provide advocacy and support for the maritime industry necessitates the ability to access and exchange data and information in a timely manner. MARAD’s Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) is responsible for providing information technology services that meet the business needs of MARAD’s programs and support agency decision-making. Ensuring the delivery of effective, efficient, and secure IT systems is key to MARAD’s success, and overseeing appropriate cybersecurity training to help reduce vulnerabilities is a central purpose of MARAD’s OCIO.

MARAD – Navigating a Stronger Future

MARAD will complete the following strategies advancing the objective for information technology and cybersecurity management:

- Strategy I.3.1: Assess and improve MARAD’s information technology systems to ensure they can meet the evolving needs of MARAD programs and their customers.
- Strategy I.3.2: Collaborate with MARAD programs to identify and prioritize IT investments that will assist in achieving performance goals.
- Strategy I.3.3: Work proactively to identify and manage cybersecurity and business continuity risks.
- Strategy I.3.4: Continue to support the updating of technology infrastructure at the USMMA and ensure conformance with all applicable Federal and U.S. DOT standards.
- Strategy I.3.5: Provide professional development and training for all MARAD staff to act as required in their roles to reduce U.S. DOT cybersecurity risks.

I.4 OBJECTIVE: DATA-DRIVEN CULTURE

Leverage business intelligence and tools within MARAD to foster data-driven policies, programs, and decision-making.

Data and data analysis are key to informing policy decisions and understanding conditions in the maritime industry. Ensuring the availability of quality maritime data and facilitating data analysis and visualization is essential to supporting a data-driven culture. MARAD will continue to strengthen its stewardship of the agency’s data resources and its ability to provide cutting edge analysis of data.

MARAD will complete the following strategies advancing the objective for data-driven culture:

- Strategy I.4.1: Maintain a central location for MARAD’s cross-cutting data resources for Data Analysis and Management.
- Strategy I.4.2: Establish and maintain a geospatial data council consistent with the requirements of the Geospatial Data Act (GDA) of 2018 to address MARAD’s strategic, tactical, operational, planning and outreach needs.
- Strategy I.4.3: Prioritize and structure data to track performance and measure outcomes.
- Strategy I.4.4: Identify opportunities to advance and improve data sharing between MARAD and its Federal partners.

MARAD – Navigating a Stronger Future

I.5 OBJECTIVE: MANAGEMENT AND OVERSIGHT

Transform MARAD business processes, authorities, staffing, training, technology, and infrastructure to best meet our Mission and Vision to ensure we remain reliable, responsive, and relevant to the Nation.

Effective resource management is central to MARAD’s ability to provide high-quality government services. Strengthening MARAD’s policies, procedures, and training plans will help to streamline program management and improve program delivery. Expanded training and development opportunities are essential for attracting and retaining highly skilled and innovative employees. MARAD will also work to ensure that its internal processes support its workforce in delivering efficient and high-performing programs.

MARAD will complete the following strategies advancing the objective for resource management and oversight:

- Strategy I.5.1 Maintain up-to-date MARAD policies and procedures consistent with established timelines to help ensure efficient implementation of programs and initiatives.
- Strategy I.5.2 Provide a variety of professional development opportunities for all grade levels through mentoring, coaching, formal development programs, and rotational/detail opportunities.
- Strategy I.5.3: Enhance efforts to recruit, develop, hire, and retain a diverse workforce within MARAD (including USMMA staff and faculty) among new hires and the Senior Executive Service, with a particular emphasis on women, people of color, and individuals with disabilities.

I.6 OBJECTIVE: A WORLD CLASS MARITIME EDUCATION AND TRAINING INSTITUTION

Empower and invest in a learning environment at the USMMA that develops leaders of exemplary character who are inspired to serve the national security, marine transportation, and economic needs of the United States as licensed Merchant Marine Officers and commissioned officers in the Armed Forces.

The U.S. Merchant Marine Academy serves a vital role in our Nation’s national security, defense, and economic security. For more than 80 years, Academy Midshipmen and graduates have distinguished themselves as leaders in the U.S. merchant marine, maritime industry, and the armed forces. For this reason, MARAD is committed to positioning the Academy for success. As the Academy identifies key priorities and initiatives, MARAD will support USMMA’s efforts to build a sustainable, resilient and innovative center of excellence that delivers future leaders for our maritime industry and Armed Forces.

MARAD – Navigating a Stronger Future

MARAD will complete the following strategies advancing the objective for a world class maritime education and training institution:

- Strategy I.6.1: Develop a 21st century Academy infrastructure that supports student learning and engages faculty, staff, coaches, and students not only to sustain the Academy but to inspire innovation at USMMA while promoting the safety, health, and wellness of all.
 - Assist the Academy with creating a campus deferred maintenance plan which includes a section on maintenance that is updated annually
 - Assist the Academy in developing and implementing a campus facilities master plan to address facilities and infrastructure needs that includes a section on Capital Improvement Projects (CIP). Submit an annual Congressional report that is distributed to internal stakeholders via the intranet.
 - Support consistent funding availability to execute infrastructure improvement in accordance with the Academy’s CIP and Master Facilities Plan.
 - Invest in Academy-wide technology infrastructure, maintenance, and support.
- Strategy I.6.2: Promote the recruitment, development, and retention of a diverse and qualified population of students, faculty, and staff that demonstrates and promotes the Institution’s values, as well as cultivates an institutional culture in which every Academy community member is respected, valued, and can fulfill their maximum potential as a leader of exemplary character.
 - Provide the necessary resources and staff Full-Time Equivalency (FTE) support to USMMA to build a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging Strategy and Program that aligns with the Academy’s strategic priorities.
 - Support the Academy as it identifies and propagates a long-range Human Resource Strategy.
- Strategy I.6.3: Enhance shared governance, trusted leadership, and an invested administration to promote prolonged success as an institution of higher education.
 - Create clear and transparent lines of communication between the METER-B/Congressional Advisory Board/the Secretary of Transportation Advisory Board where the advancement of USMMA's program is identified at its core.
 - Provide resources to enable an Academy-wide data collection and performance measurement system.
- Strategy I.6.4: Invigorate the Academy’s educational program while promoting student success, experiential learning in the regiment, and professional expertise both ashore and afloat.

MARAD – Navigating a Stronger Future

- Create more industry partnership connections that can be utilized by the Academy’s Shipboard Training Department to expand opportunities for USMMA Midshipmen to attain internships.
- Sail aboard a broader variety of maritime platforms to enhance their Sea Year experience.

ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Increase response rate to Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey.
- Update 100% of Maritime Administration Orders (MAOs) every eight years.

2. SAFETY

Improve the health, safety, and well-being of maritime transportation workers. Strengthen maritime transportation system resilience to protect it from disruption from cyber and other attacks.

The safety and security of the Marine Transportation System (MTS) and our Nation's maritime workforce is an important priority for MARAD. To that end, MARAD key priorities focus on creating a safe and secure environment for mariner education and training, fostering educational and workplaces free of bias, sexual harassment and assault, and other discriminatory behavior and practices.

Improving safety in the MTS requires harnessing technology innovations and best practices to reduce and mitigate incidents. As a non-regulatory agency, MARAD works with maritime stakeholders, and international and national standards organizations to support development of safety and environmental standards and guidance for maritime operations. Strategically, MARAD's programs support opportunities for research, development and demonstration of innovative technologies and practices to address emerging safety and security threats related to position, navigation, and timing. Finally, MARAD is establishing new methods for disseminating critical safety and cybersecurity threats and information.

2.1 OBJECTIVE: REDUCE/MITIGATE SAFETY INCIDENTS

Work with research and private maritime stakeholders to harness technological innovations to reduce and mitigate safety incidents in the maritime industry.

MARAD's Office of Safety is responsible for promoting and encouraging the development and application of agency best management practices, procedures, and technologies that contribute to improvements in maritime safety. Maritime safety standards and challenges are constantly evolving, and various government and non-government entities are involved in ensuring the safety of the marine transportation system. Active and effective coordination with these entities will be key to MARAD's ability to achieve this objective.

MARAD will complete the following strategies advancing the objective for reducing and mitigating safety incidents:

- Strategy 2.1.1: SafeMTS - Expand collaborative effort with the U.S. Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) and MTS vessel operators to develop a near-miss reporting system.
- Strategy 2.1.2: Continue to partner with DOT and the maritime industry to pursue mitigation strategies to address Position, Navigation and Timing (PNT) interference.
- Strategy 2.1.3: Partner with Ship Operations Cooperative Program (SOCP) the American Society for Testing Materials (ASTM), the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), and international standards organizations to advance U.S. best practices and develop industry standard safety practices for MTS.

MARAD – Navigating a Stronger Future

2.2 OBJECTIVE: WORKFORCE SAFETY

Support worker safety training and technical assistance across the maritime transportation system.

MARAD and the USMMA are committed to enhancing workforce safety training and creating safe workplace environments. It is the mission of the USMMA to educate and graduate leaders of exemplary character who support the national security, and economic needs of the Nation. Achieving this mission requires a maritime community characterized by mutual respect, support, and accountability. As appropriate, MARAD and the USMMA will continue to implement policies, programs, and procedures that are designed to strengthen a culture of prevention of, and response to, sexual assault and sexual harassment (SASH).

Recent efforts by MARAD's Maritime Environmental and Technical Assistance (META) program have examined ways to enhance the safety of vessel operations. In addition to the development of SafeMTS, META has partnered with USACE to explore the feasibility of automatically transmitting weather data to vessels through AIS messages. Efforts such as these are designed to provide the maritime workforce with the information needed to carry out their jobs safely and effectively.

MARAD will complete the following strategies advancing the objective for worker safety:

- Strategy 2.2.1: Facilitate a maritime educational and workplace environment that is unbiased and safe from sexual harassment and sexual assault, as well as any other discriminatory practices or behavior.
- Strategy 2.2.2: Fully resource and maintain the Every Mariner Builds a Respectful Culture (EMBARC) program to prevent and facilitate appropriate responses to incidents of sexual violence and sexual harassment on U.S.-flag ships.
- Strategy 2.2.3: Continue advocacy of mandatory Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment (SASH) prevention standards in the maritime industry and thereby, facilitate a long-run change in industry culture.
- Strategy 2.2.4: Continue working with Federal partners (e.g., USCG, USACE, NOAA, U.S. DOS) to improve workforce safety in the maritime transportation system.

2.3 OBJECTIVE: CYBERSECURITY

Provide technical assistance to MTS stakeholders to better identify, assess, and address critical physical and cybersecurity issues and threats.

Industry stakeholders across the maritime sector depend heavily on a wide variety of information technology networks and operational technology systems daily to conduct business, communicate, and control ships and ports. Under our missions of advocating for and supporting the U.S. maritime industry, MARAD serves as a key advocate for appropriate

MARAD – Navigating a Stronger Future

maritime cybersecurity protections, threat communication, and maritime cyber literacy among U.S. mariners.

MARAD will complete the following strategies advancing the objective of maritime cybersecurity enhancement:

- Strategy 2.3.1: MARAD will engage industry and government to assess, inform and address cyber security vulnerabilities in the MTS, with a focus on port and vessel operations.
- Strategy 2.3.2: Encourage incorporation of physical and cybersecurity protections in the standards for design of emerging and connected systems and technologies within the MTS.
- Strategy 2.3.3: Engage with USMMA and the SMAs to establish and promote cybersecurity education.
- Strategy 2.3.4: Support enhanced two-way communications regarding cybersecurity threats and mitigations between MTS and U.S. Federal government maritime cybersecurity stakeholders.

SAFETY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Percentage of commercial vessels hosting a USMMA cadet that underwent an EMBARC assessment.
- Develop a baseline for measuring the use of the Near Miss Reporting System.

3. ECONOMIC STRENGTH AND GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS

Strengthen the security and efficiency of maritime capabilities essential to U.S. economic and national security.

The past decade has brought about momentous change for the Nation and for the Maritime Administration. World events like Covid-19, sea level rise, flooding, and increases in severe weather events such as hurricanes have brought renewed attention to the maritime transportation system.

Whether it is cargo movement delays as witnessed by vessels sitting offshore at anchor for weeks waiting to off-load at our Nation’s ports, disruptions in the supply chain, or the devastation to shorelines and coastal communities from extreme weather events, the maritime transportation system has taken center stage. Once considered an outlier, maritime transportation is recognized as a vital and integral part of the Nation’s surface transportation that is tied to the Nation’s economic and national security.

3.1 OBJECTIVE: SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT U.S. MERCHANT MARINE

Promote sustainable and resilient growth in the U.S. Merchant Marine by expanding opportunities for U.S.-flag vessels.

The U.S. maritime industry is critical to our national and economic security and ensuring the overall health of the U.S. Merchant Marine is a central mission of MARAD. As part of this mission, MARAD administers a series of programs designed to ensure that vessels, infrastructure, and mariners will be available to support our Nation during times of war or national emergency. MARAD is also responsible for monitoring the required use of U.S.-flag vessels to ship cargo that is owned, procured, furnished, or financed by the U.S. government. The strength of the U.S.-flag, commercial fleet heavily depends on the availability of cargo, and MARAD will continue to assist Federal agencies in meeting their obligations under cargo preference laws and regulations. MARAD is committed to promoting the long-term viability of the U.S.-flag commercial fleet through programs such as Maritime Security Program (MSP), Tanker Security Program (TSP), and Cable Security Fleet (CSF). Collectively, the MSP, TSP, and CSF provide a versatile fleet of U.S.-flag vessels available to support our Nation’s defense needs and serve as a mechanism for encouraging newer vessels to enter the fleet. These programs also partially offset the higher cost of operating a vessel under the U.S.-flag, and in the case of MSP and TSP, provide vessels with preference for the carriage of government-impelled cargoes.

“Our biggest strength is our people... and we need more mariners now at sea, serving our country and helping us to ensure our economic and national security needs are met. We’re focused on working with industry, working with labor, working with stakeholders across the maritime diaspora and developing ways to train, retain and reduce barriers to people coming into the industry and staying in the industry.”

*RDML Ann Phillips
Maritime Administrator*

MARAD – Navigating a Stronger Future

MARAD will complete the following strategies advancing the objective for promoting a sustainable and resilient U.S. Merchant Marine:

- Strategy 3.1.1: Support U.S.-flag tankers in international trade through the TSP.
- Strategy 3.1.2: Support the number of dry cargo U.S.-flag ships in international trade through the MSP.
- Strategy 3.1.3: Support Cable ships available for undersea cable repair through the CSF Program.
- Strategy 3.1.4: Utilize the MSP, TSP, and CSF to maintain a modern, privately-owned fleet of U.S.-flag ships available to support DOD requirements during times of conflict of national emergencies.
- Strategy 3.1.5: Support U.S.-flag ships in international trade through promoting opportunities to carry government impelled cargo.
- Strategy 3.1.6: Support maritime training and education initiatives to ensure the availability of skilled U.S. mariners.

3.2 OBJECTIVE: SUPPORT THE U.S. SHIPBUILDING AND REPAIR INDUSTRIAL BASE

Improve support programs for the shipbuilding and repair industry.

U.S. shipyards and their skilled labor force are key to ensuring our Nation's ability to readily expand the U.S.-flag fleet and repair vessels during times of war or national emergency. The long-term success of the U.S. shipbuilding and repair industry will require modernization through capital improvements, the infusion of more efficient processes, and a skilled workforce. Going forward, it will also be necessary to address the lack of commercially developed, militarily useful ships being constructed in American shipyards. MARAD administers several programs designed to encourage the construction of vessels in U.S. shipyards and to promote the viability of US. Shipyards and their workforce. Advancing U.S. shipbuilding capabilities and offsetting the comparatively high cost of building ships in U.S. shipyards relative to other countries will continue to be a key priority of MARAD.

MARAD will complete the following strategies advancing the objective for support to the U.S. shipbuilding and repair industrial base:

- Strategy 3.2.1: Continue utilizing the Federal Ship Financing Program (commonly referred to as "Title XI") to encourage shipowners to obtain new vessels from U.S. shipyards and reduce barriers to the application and award of Title XI financing.
- Strategy 3.2.2: Utilize the Small Shipyard Grant Program to support the efficiency and competitive operation of small shipyards in the U.S.
- Strategy 3.2.3: Encourage the construction, reconstruction, and acquisition of U.S.-flag vessels through the administration of the Construction Reserve Fund (CRF) and Capital Construction Fund (CCF).
- Strategy 3.2.4: Examine options to support the U.S. shipbuilding industry through searift recapitalization, including planned shipbuilding initiatives that focus on the construction of commercial, militarily useful ships that would eventually be accepted into the government-owned fleet.

3.3 OBJECTIVE: SEALIFT CAPABILITIES AND MTS RESPONSE READINESS

Strengthen the readiness of our sealift assets to respond to emergent military or humanitarian contingencies.

MARAD is responsible for the management and maintenance of the National Defense Reserve Fleet (NDRF)— a fleet of government-owned vessels ready to support national defense and emergencies. The Ready Reserve Force (RRF), which is a subset of the NDRF, consists of vessels that are maintained in a readiness status to support the rapid deployment of U.S. military forces. The RRF is an aging fleet, with some vessels well past their expected duration of use. Continued focus on the material condition and recapitalization of the RRF will ensure that the fleet is in a ready and responsive condition. Going forward, MARAD will continue to evaluate options for recapitalizing the government-owned fleet and will work to support critical commercial sealift programs. This includes a continued commitment to the National Security Multi-mission Vessel (NSMV) program, which enhances the SMAs training capabilities and provides critical support assets for the Federal government in times of need. MARAD recognizes that the availability of a sufficient, well-trained merchant mariner base is key to ensuring RRF readiness. In addition, MARAD leads the National Port Readiness Network (NPRN), which is a cooperative working group comprised of nine Federal agencies. The purpose of the NPRN is to ensure the readiness and efficient operation of commercial strategic seaports during contingencies and other defense emergencies. MARAD will continue to ensure that our Nation’s requirements for sealift and landside infrastructure are being met during times of peace and war.



MARAD will complete the following strategies advancing the objective for sealift capabilities and MTS response readiness:

- Strategy 3.3.1: Continue to ensure the availability and readiness of government-owned ships in the NDRF and RRF.
- Strategy 3.3.2: Continue to identify and implement recapitalization strategies for replacing the RRF ships with modern vessels as they reach the end of their useful lives.
- Strategy 3.3.3: Continue to coordinate with Federal partners through the NPRN to ensure the readiness of commercial strategic seaports.
- Strategy 3.3.4: Support mariner education, training, and retention initiatives and partner with stakeholders, both Federal and non-Federal, to identify strategies to help address the mariner shortage.

3.4 OBJECTIVE: MTS RESILIENCY AND RECOVERY

Encourage the strengthening of MTS resiliency, recovery, and reconstitution plans and protocols to minimize the effects of system disruptions and hasten recovery.

A resilient U.S. maritime industry requires that ports and waterways can adequately resist and recover from the impacts of adverse events, including natural disasters and man-made events (e.g., cyber-attacks, pandemics, or terrorist attacks). MARAD recognizes that the Nation's economic and security needs depend on the ability of the MTS to quickly recover from major disruptions. Incorporating considerations of resiliency, response, and recovery into MARAD's operations is necessary for ensuring both economic stability and military readiness. MARAD will continue to work with its Federal partners to reduce the impacts of system disruptions and will explore ways to leverage its grant programs to equip ports to withstand emergencies and disasters.

MARAD will complete the following strategies advancing the objective for MTS resiliency and recovery:

- Strategy 3.4.1: MARAD will continue to partner with FEMA and other Federal and state entities to respond to, recover from, and minimize needed system recovery time from natural and man-made hazards.
- Strategy 3.4.2: MARAD will implement process improvements to reduce grant agreement dwell time to allow ports to more rapidly recover from operational disruptions caused by natural or climate-related hazards.

ECONOMIC STRENGTH AND GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Strengthen our supply chain and reduce bottlenecks at our ports; and increase port capacity throughput availability by 10% by 2026.
- Increase the Number of U.S.-flag Vessels in International Service.
- Meet DOD-required shipping capacity and crew available within mobilization timelines.
- Complete construction of the five National Security Multi-mission Vessels (NSMV) by the end of FY 2026.
- Ensure training ship days available to meet all SMA maritime training requirements.
- RRF shipping capacity and crew availability readiness meeting DOD requirements.
- Increase transparency of reporting on cargo preference compliance by Federal agencies.
- Within available resources, maintain recapitalization targets for the RRF.

4. EQUITY

Reduce barriers to help facilitate cultural change in the maritime industry enabling it to become more diverse, equitable and inclusive, while positioning MARAD as a model employer.

Our ports, terminals and maritime operations can play an important role in supporting the Administration and Department’s goals to address impacts on disadvantaged and underserved communities. As transportation hubs, port and near port communities experience impacts from maritime transportation, intermodal facilities, and transportation corridors. MARAD, particularly through its PIDP and marine highways programs can strengthen port and maritime facility operations to reduce negative environmental impacts on those communities. In its role supporting and reducing impediments to maritime education and training, MARAD has introduced new initiatives to end sexual assault and sexual harassment in both the educational environment and aboard ship.

4.1 OBJECTIVE: REDUCE IMPEDIMENTS TO MARINER WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Identify and reduce barriers in recruiting, training, and retaining the Mariner workforce in order to support the Nation’s economic and security needs.

MARAD will address impediments to mariner workforce development by strengthening support for both existing and new mariner workforce development programs and the institutions involved, promoting enhanced diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility to mariner and related careers, ensuring the availability of a sufficient number of skilled mariners for meeting the national economic and security needs. The Mariner Workforce Strategic Plan has been developed parallel to the overarching MARAD Strategic Plan and aims to achieve these goals. The Plan incorporates several objectives and focuses on strategies designed to help grow the mariner workforce and aligns with the broader goals of the Administration and the Department. The Plan is comprehensive in scope, leverages existing programs, and identifies possible new initiatives targeting mariner recruitment, training, and retention gaps.



MARAD – Navigating a Stronger Future

MARAD will complete the following strategies advancing the objective for reducing impediments to mariner workforce development:

- Strategy 4.1.1: Work with Federal and industry stakeholders to reduce administrative processes and improve shipboard working conditions.
- Strategy 4.1.2: Promote a maritime educational and workplace environment that is unbiased and safe from sexual harassment and sexual assault.
- Strategy 4.1.3: Promote the Centers of Excellence for Domestic Maritime Workforce Education (CoE) program.
- Strategy 4.1.4: Establish mariner incentives to reduce barriers to recruitment, training, and retention.



4.2 OBJECTIVE: USMMA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

Leverage USMMA as a leader in, and champion of change for diversity, equity, and inclusivity.

MARAD administers grant programs that contribute to the development and modernization of the maritime transportation system. U.S. ports and waterways, as well as U.S.-flag vessels, provide essential connections between communities and the vital goods they rely on. MARAD grant programs play an important role in expanding connectivity to maritime transportation and have the potential to reduce landside congestion and its associated impacts on local communities. Expanding participation in MARAD grant programs, especially amongst disadvantaged or rural communities, is essential to ensuring equitable access to maritime transportation.

MARAD will complete the following strategies advancing the objective for equitable grant programs:



4.3 OBJECTIVE: EQUITABLE GRANT PROGRAMS

Identify opportunities to include equity in all grant programs.

- Strategy 4.3.1: Consider racial equity and barriers to opportunity in awarding PIDP and USMH discretionary grants.
- Strategy 4.3.2: Require PIDP and USMH grant project awardees to identify and report on benefits (including expanded access) to disadvantaged communities.
- Strategy 4.3.3: Conduct public outreach and provide technical assistance to potential grant applicants, particularly in underrepresented communities, in order to reduce barriers to participation.

EQUITY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- By 2025, increase by 5% the number of U.S. DOT discretionary grant applicants from disadvantaged communities who have never applied for U.S. DOT funding before.
- Ensure 100% of Domestic Maritime Workforce Centers of Excellence Grants include a Workforce Development Equity component promoting diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility within the institution, including among the student body, faculty, and staff.

5. CLIMATE SUSTAINABILITY

Actively support programs that reduce maritime transportation environmental impacts to promote a safe, resilient, and sustainable marine transportation system.

Severe weather events, sea level rise, and aging infrastructure warrant a renewed effort to adapt transportation planning, infrastructure development, and sustainability efforts to meet these new challenges. Simply rebuilding old infrastructure is no longer sufficient. Infrastructure requires implementation of innovative measures to harden it against new climate events.

Reduction of carbon emissions, criteria pollutants, and other environmental impacts has taken on new urgency. Innovation in alternative/low carbon energy and fuels for the maritime sector is vital to national greenhouse gas mitigation efforts. As reflected in the U.S. National Blueprint for Transportation Decarbonization (Blueprint)², reducing and eliminating greenhouse gas emissions in the maritime sector is a priority. MARAD's strategic goals and objectives reflect that urgency.

5.1 OBJECTIVE: MARITIME DECARBONIZATION

Collaborate with stakeholders to develop a framework to assist with and encourage maritime decarbonization.

MARAD has worked with other government agencies to finalize a maritime sector-specific decarbonization strategy that aligns with the Blueprint. The strategy identifies efforts the agency needs to take to further move the U.S. Maritime Transportation System towards decarbonization goals. Further, aligned with other strategic objectives defined, the agency must also continue to include stakeholder outreach and intra- and interagency alignment on decarbonization efforts, where appropriate.

MARAD will complete the following strategies advancing the objective for maritime decarbonization:

- Strategy 5.1.1: Collaborate with DOE, EPA, USCG, DOT, and maritime stakeholders to develop a framework to assist with and encourage maritime decarbonization.
- Strategy 5.1.2: Conduct outreach through workshops and key stakeholder events.
- Strategy 5.1.3: Ensure publication and dissemination of the results of R&D-related efforts on the MARAD website.

5.2 OBJECTIVE: REDUCE NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF THE MTS

Align technical and financial assistance programs to support the reduction of negative impacts of the marine transportation system.

Maritime transportation can result in a range of environmental impacts on coastal communities, especially those located near ports. MARAD will continue to work closely with the EPA and

² [The U.S. National Blueprint for Transportation Decarbonization \(energy.gov\)](https://www.energy.gov/blueprint), A Joint Strategy to Transform Transportation.

MARAD – Navigating a Stronger Future

other agencies within U.S. DOT to support efforts to enhance the environmental sustainability of the maritime industry. Incorporating considerations of environmental impacts into all MARAD grant and finance programs will help ensure that MARAD investments are contributing to increased sustainability within the maritime industry.

MARAD will complete the following strategies advancing the objective for reducing negative impacts of the MTS:

- Strategy 5.2.1: Review MARAD grant programs, Title XI, and CCF to ensure appropriate weight is given to projects that reduce or mitigate impacts of maritime transportation activities.
- Strategy 5.2.2: Provide more technical assistance funding to prioritize maritime decarbonization research and demonstration efforts.
- Strategy 5.2.3: Pursue joint RD&T and demonstration projects with other DOT modes – particularly with FHWA and FTA ferry-related programs.
- Strategy 5.2.4: Pursue additional multi-agency RD&T efforts with DOE, EPA, Navy, USCG, and other agencies focused on maritime issues.

5.3 OBJECTIVE: NET-ZERO MARAD OPERATIONS

Advance net-zero emissions for standard operations.

MARAD recognizes the importance of reducing its carbon footprint and will work toward the increased use of renewable energy at its sites and facilities. This will require MARAD to explore opportunities to reduce its energy usage and to develop strategies for incorporating climate-friendly energy sources into its operations. Identifying energy conservation measures that could be adopted within MARAD's Ready Reserve Force (RRF) will also be key to reducing the agency's carbon footprint.

MARAD will complete the following strategies advancing the objective for net-zero MARAD operations:

- Strategy 5.3.1: Examine ways to increase the use of renewable energy sources at MARAD sites and facilities, including the installation of solar panels and geothermal heating systems.
- Strategy 5.3.2: Continue to identify opportunities for implementing energy conservation measures, including strategies to reduce energy usage within the RRF.
- Strategy 5.3.3: Investigate the use of Power Purchase Agreements for solar energy at MARAD sites.

5.4 OBJECTIVE: LEVERAGING THE MARITIME INDUSTRY TO SUPPORT DECARBONIZATION

Leverage the U.S. Maritime Industry to support the offshore wind industry.

MARAD supports several industry-facing programs that encourage reduction of greenhouse gas emissions within the maritime transportation system. Leveraging that assistance with the maritime industry can also support sectors outside of transportation, such as offshore wind. To close the carbon loop, it's important to partner the offshore wind industry with clean, U.S.-flagged supply, crewing, and construction vessels and other port-related green components.

MARAD will complete the following strategies advancing the objective for leveraging the maritime industry to support decarbonization:

- Strategy 5.4.1: Prioritize vessels for offshore wind construction and maintenance in supporting the shipbuilding industrial base.
- Strategy 5.4.2: Seek to fund projects in MARAD's discretionary grant programs whose applicants expect to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Strategy 5.4.3: Reduce landside congestion by promoting the use of available capacity on our Nation's waterways for the transport of people and freight.

CLIMATE SUSTAINABILITY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Implement deep energy retrofits in 30% of covered facilities, as defined in section 432 of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007, by FY 2030.
- Achieve 100% net annual CFE use for MARAD operations by 2030.

6. TRANSFORMATION

Invest in purpose-driven research and innovation to meet present challenges and modernize the transportation system of the future.

Like other parts of the transportation system, the MTS industry, infrastructure and intermodal systems are facing many new challenges ranging from decaying and outdated infrastructure to climate change, environmental sustainability, new security and cyber threats that demand both government and industry innovation.

Innovation in the maritime sector is particularly challenging because of the variety of stakeholders, complexity of components and systems and its linkages to the broader U.S. and global supply chains.

6.1 OBJECTIVE: ADVANCE INNOVATION

Provide technical assistance and RD&T support to maritime stakeholders to advance innovation.

MARAD programs can play an important role in supporting modernization and innovation of the U.S. maritime transportation system. Currently, MARAD administers several industry-facing programs that can further support advancement of innovation. The Maritime Environmental and Technical Assistance (META) program is MARAD’s only funded program that supports RD&T. Leveraging the RD&T completed under META with grant programs such as Title XI, PIDP, and USMH can fill in data gaps to understand “what works” for the industry and de-risk new technology applications for sector components such as vessels and ports. In addition to leveraging RD&T with other MARAD programs, it is critical that the agency continues to collaborate with other DOT modal efforts (such as the OST RD&T Planning Team) and government agencies such as DOE, EPA, and the USCG.

MARAD will complete the following strategies advancing the objective for innovation:

- Strategy 6.1.1: MARAD will conduct research on technologies, innovations, and applications to promote the development and improved utilization of ports. MARAD will ensure that the results of this research will be published on the MARAD website.
- Strategy 6.1.2: MARAD will seek to broaden maritime industry and government collaborative partnerships for innovative RD&T through META.
- Strategy 6.1.3: Align MARAD grant and financial assistance programs to support innovation and investment strategies that adapt to new market and environmental conditions and policies.
- Strategy 6.1.4: Continue to modernize the technology infrastructure at USMMA to facilitate additional emphasis on innovation, research, and development.



MARAD – Navigating a Stronger Future

6.2 OBJECTIVE: MARITIME STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

Work with maritime stakeholders, including other government entities, to share noteworthy practices and to accelerate the adoption of innovations and technologies.

Stakeholder outreach is a critical tool to disseminate and gather information. Outreach allows for greater stakeholder transparency and informs Agency direction/decision-making. Outreach can consist of several initiatives such as convening workshops and other forums, posting to the agency website and social media, joining industry and government-led, subject specific working groups, and advertising Requests For Information (RFI). Currently, various forms of outreach are employed by several MARAD programs, where some are driven by statutory language. Standardizing existing outreach models such as those already established by the META program, PIDP, USMH, etc. will further ensure greater dissemination of MARAD efforts related to advancing innovation.

MARAD will complete the following strategies to supporting the objective for advancing maritime stakeholder outreach:

- Strategy 6.2.1: MARAD will create and foster partnerships with regional and local stakeholders to identify and address issues impacting the marine transportation system.
- Strategy 6.2.2: MARAD will work to identify inefficiencies in the maritime transportation system and will recommend operational and/or capital improvements for more efficient use of the system.

6.3 OBJECTIVE: SUPPORT U.S. MARITIME CAPABILITIES THROUGH INFRASTRUCTURE MODERNIZATION

Modernize maritime infrastructure and systems for National and economic security, and emergency response.

U.S.-flag commercial and government-owned vessels play a crucial role in supporting the Nation's sealift needs. Likewise, maritime ports are a vital part of our Nation's maritime transportation system and are a key contributor to U.S. economic and national security. Going forward, MARAD will continue to evaluate options for modernizing the U.S.-flag fleet and will work to support critical commercial sealift programs. Leveraging DOT resources to support the development and modernization of maritime ports will enhance our economic competitiveness and improve our national security posture. MARAD also recognizes that a well-trained mariner workforce is essential to the successful operation of the U.S.-flag fleet. Identifying opportunities to modernize infrastructure and assets that support mariner training at the SMAs and the USMMA remains a key priority.

MARAD – Navigating a Stronger Future

MARAD will complete the following strategies advancing the objective for sealift and infrastructure modernization:

- Strategy 6.3.1: Continue to modernize both the private and government-owned U.S.-flag fleets through recapitalization and existing MARAD programs (e.g., MSP, TSP, and CSF).
- Strategy 6.3.2: Provide investment opportunities in coastal, inland, and Great Lakes ports to ensure supply chain resilience, to identify strategic solutions, and to alleviate potential bottlenecks.
- Strategy 6.3.3: Identify and implement measures to upgrade and modernize infrastructure and assets that support SMAs, USMMA and RRF/NDRF operations and resiliency.

TRANSFORMATION PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Double the number of research and deployment projects centered on breakthrough discoveries that introduce new technologies or approaches not currently deployed in the transportation system.
- By 2026, support 5 novel data and technology approaches related to artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and infrastructure resilience in communities across the U.S.
- By 2026, support 5 projects that build data and technology systems for transportation planning and infrastructure operation that serve as interoperable platforms that can engage with various tools, technologies, and approaches.