

Prepared Statement
of
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U.S. Department of Transportation
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Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
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Mr. Chairman, Senator McCain, Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as President Bush's nominee to be the next Administrator of the Maritime Administration. It is a great honor to be called to serve the President and our Nation in these challenging times. Thank you Senator Hutchison for your kind introduction. I am honored and grateful to have your support.

The President's long term commitment to defeat terrorism will require significant support from all segments of the US maritime industry. In this regard, the Maritime Administration will play an integral role in providing sufficient commercial and government-owned strategic sealift to support our military's overseas operations. These programs include the 115-ship Voluntary Intermodal Sealift Agreement program (VISA), the 76 ship Ready Reserve Force, and the highly skilled U.S. citizen mariners to crew all these vessels. At home, the Maritime Administration will coordinate with private industry, labor and various government agencies in an effort to ensure that the United States has secure ports, adequate shipbuilding and repair capabilities, efficient intermodal transportation systems, to support our ongoing war against terrorism. If

confirmed by the Senate, I will devote my experience, knowledge and passion for this industry to accomplish these objectives.

I do want to emphasize the importance I attach to the role of this agency in the current situation. Governor Ridge has called for a “comprehensive and coordinated” multi-agency effort to ensure our homeland security. The potential for maritime related terrorism poses an unacceptable threat to our homeland security. The Maritime Administration is the primary conduit to the maritime industry, and has substantial capability to advise Secretary Mineta on this critical issue. The Maritime Administration’s knowledge, experience and industry relationships will help to ensure that an appropriate balance is struck between proposed security measures and the efficient flow of commerce. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Secretary Mineta, Governor Ridge, and my DOT colleagues at the Department to develop short and long-term enhancements of port and maritime security.

More broadly, the Maritime Administration is the promotional agency for the US Maritime Industry. I am committed to managing the agency’s staff and resources in a way that provides the best value to the government and industry. I will also strive to achieve a consensus among the stakeholders for a renewal of the Maritime Security Program sufficient to meet our national security requirements.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with and advising Secretary Mineta in furthering his domestic Maritime Transportation System initiative. The Secretary has rightly said that “transportation is key to the productivity and therefore the success of

virtually every business in America.” New and revitalized domestic maritime transportation infrastructure is essential to meet our nation’s domestic transportation needs to support our economy into the 21st Century.

In summary, a strong US maritime industry is essential to our national defense in time of war or declared emergency, and a fundamental bulwark of United States economic well being. If the US is to maintain our position as the world’s preeminent international trading power, we must also promote and maintain our position as a viable maritime power. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with the members of this committee in developing maritime policy tailored to meet these strategic objectives.

Let me conclude by thanking the committee for its consideration of my nomination and repeating my promise to work closely with you. I would be pleased to respond to any questions you may have at this time.