

**Testimony of Ann C. Phillips**  
**Rear Admiral, US Navy (Retired)**  
**Nominee to be Maritime Administrator**  
**Before the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation**  
**December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

Chair Cantwell, Ranking Member Wicker, and Members of the Committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as the nominee for the position of Maritime Administrator. I want to thank President Biden and Secretary Buttigieg for nominating me to fill this role, which is critical both to our economic and national security.

I want to introduce my husband, Luis Boticario, Captain, U.S. Navy Retired, who is watching virtually. *(and my brother, Dr. Jonathan Phillips, who is here today.)*

If I am honored enough to be confirmed, I pledge that I will work diligently to execute the duties and responsibilities of the Maritime Administrator, and to support Secretary Buttigieg and the extraordinary team at the Department of Transportation and the Maritime Administration as we work to strengthen our merchant marine, continue to strengthen the resilience of our supply chains, and implement a historic investment in our maritime infrastructure. I am committed to working closely with the members of this Committee and your colleagues to advance our nation's maritime transportation and infrastructure goals. I know from my experience on the staff of the Chief of Naval Operations the critical work of Congressional Committees and how hard you work to meet the needs of your constituents and your communities. I also know how important it is to listen to and work with you and a broad range of stakeholders to find bipartisan solutions to the challenges we face.

During my nearly 31 year naval career, I had the honor of holding Command at Sea three times—at each of the Ship, Destroyer Squadron, and Strike Group levels. As Commander, Expeditionary Strike Group TWO (ESG-2), I worked closely with the Military Sealift Command to ensure capacity and support for a host of related strategic response missions. As a result of my experiences in this assignment, I understand the critical role of our commercial merchant marine in providing the vital sealift on which our military relies—and I witnessed many of the challenges that confront our commercial fleet.

Previously, I also served as Deputy Director and Director of Surface Warfare Division (N86). I managed the annual Fiscal Year Defense Plan submission for the Surface Force, which included ships, combat systems, weapons systems, and related training and infrastructure. I retired as a Rear Admiral in December of 2013.

Most recently, for the past three years, I have served as the Special Assistant to Governor Ralph Northam for Coastal Adaptation and Protection in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Under my leadership, we developed and delivered the Commonwealth's first Virginia Coastal Resilience Master Plan, which sets forth strategies to protect our most critical and vulnerable coastal infrastructure from sea level rise and coastal flood hazards.

Throughout my career, safety has been at the forefront of my mission. The foundational priority for USDOT will always be safety. Likewise, safety will be the “north star” for the Maritime Administration should I have the honor to be confirmed as Maritime Administrator.

In addition, for the Maritime Administration, my priorities would be:

- Promoting a strong U.S. Merchant Marine and continuing the recapitalization of the strategic sealift fleet, and continuing support for a competitive, safe, and modern maritime industry that is capable of meeting strategic sealift support requirements and prepared to succeed in a contested environment.
- Continuing the work initiated by the DOT and MARAD to address the many challenges at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, including implementing measures to support a safe and inclusive learning and training environment both on campus and at sea in which sexual assault and harassment are not tolerated, advancing the ongoing effort to address the Academy’s many infrastructure challenges, and strengthening MARAD’s oversight of the Academy and supporting effective governance, and tackling the many other issues enumerated in the study recently released by the National Academy of Public Administration.
- Third, support effective and speedy implementation of the grant programs authorized under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

As we continue to emerge from the pandemic, and aided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to improve our maritime systems, supply chains, infrastructure and industry, and to ensure that it equitably serves all Americans—in communities of all sizes. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with you all to achieve these urgent goals.

I am confident that my lifetime of service at sea, my experience commanding major U.S. and international maritime operations, my background managing fiscal resources and requirements development for the Surface Force and my recent experience crafting equitable climate resilience and coastal adaptation and protection strategies for the federal and maritime infrastructure of the Commonwealth of Virginia has prepared me to serve as Maritime Administrator.

In closing, I thank the Committee for the opportunity to appear before you today and I welcome your questions.