

Testimony of
David T. Matsuda
Nominee for Administrator of the Maritime Administration, Department of
Transportation
before the
Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
United States Senate
January 26, 2010

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Hutchison, and members of the
Committee:

I am greatly honored to be here today before the Committee, and to receive the President's nomination to serve as Administrator of the Maritime Administration.

For many years I was fortunate to witness the Committee's work in transportation and maritime issues from well behind the dais as a staffer. So it gives me great pride to be back in this room today among colleagues and friends. I've had the opportunity to work with many of your staff members, and they have represented your interests fiercely, but always did so with great civility.

If confirmed, I pledge to you that I will work for President Obama and Secretary LaHood to carry out the mission of the Maritime Administration and execute the duties prescribed by the laws of our country. Over the years I have witnessed this Committee play a tremendous role in maritime leadership and oversight, and I will strive to ensure that its strong working relationship with the agency continues.

The impacts of our nation's maritime industry are not limited to coastal

states—you don't have to have an ocean to depend on the maritime industry. Items brought in by ship make their way to store shelves and factory lines throughout the nation. Some raw materials we mine, goods we produce, and agricultural products we grow for export leave through our seaports or travel down rivers or across great lakes to distant markets.

In all, 36 states have a maritime port—whether it's on a river, lake, gulf, or ocean. Merchant mariners live in just about every state in the Union, and midshipmen nominated by you and your colleagues to study at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy can claim home to all but one state. Some states have shipyards or marine manufacturers which can be the largest sources of jobs in an entire community or region. I feel that these basic elements of our maritime transportation system are influenced by the many federal programs managed by the Maritime Administration.

I believe the agency's mission is critical to ensuring these elements all exist and are adequate to support our nation's sealift needs—for our military as well as our economy.

Today's maritime industry is struggling with many tough challenges: a lagging economy, climate change, the threats of invasive species, piracy and other security issues, a greatly expanded Panama Canal opening in 2014, and an aging workforce, to name a few. I feel my experience working within the federal government, and especially working in the Senate, has allowed me a broad understanding of how these challenges can be approached successfully: by working with all stakeholders in good faith and with transparency in decision-making.

Since coming back to the Department of Transportation, I've had the opportunity to again work with some highly capable federal professionals, who show great passion for their work. If confirmed, it will be my privilege to work with these men and women to execute the relevant laws and policies of our country to help ensure that the merchant marine is there when we need it, and especially when we need it the most.

Thank you.