



CSA Summary on America's Maritime Action Plan

The White House has released "America's Maritime Action Plan," on Friday. It is a comprehensive strategy to restore the United States status as a global maritime leader. The plan emphasizes the critical vulnerability to both U.S. economic and national security caused by the current reliance on foreign-built and foreign flagged vessels due to the diminished U.S. flagged fleet and limited domestic shipbuilding capacity.

For owners and operators, it aims to stimulate demand for U.S.-built and U.S.-flagged vessels through significant new financial incentives, cargo preference requirements, and federal support programs. Key proposals include establishing a "Maritime Security Trust Fund" financed by a new universal fee on foreign-built vessels entering U.S. ports, creating a "Strategic Commercial Fleet (SCF)" to support U.S. vessels in international trade, and implementing major deregulatory actions to reduce burdens on domestic operators. It proposes new fees and taxes intended to "level the playing field" with foreign competitors and fund the revitalization effort. The administration has promised to submit its MAP legislative request along with its FY27 budget.

This is a high-level, strategic framework that outlines the administration's goals and proposed policies. It describes the *what* not the *when* the specific actions will take place. The specific timelines or implementation dates will need to come through subsequent, specific legislative proposals, rulemaking, or implementation guidance.

The plan is structured around four key pillars:

Pillar I: Rebuild U.S. Shipbuilding Capacity and Capabilities

- **Increase Domestic Shipbuilding Capacity:** Aims to expand the number of active shipbuilding yards to address the fact that less than one percent of new commercial ships are built domestically.
- **Domestic Sourcing:** The plan seeks to reduce dependency on foreign suppliers by developing domestic capacity for critical components like large marine engines, gears, and propellers.
- **Shipyard and Vessel Financing:** The plan calls for modernizing and expanding existing programs like the Title XI Loan Guarantee Program, Capital Construction



Fund (CCF), and Construction Reserve Fund (CRF) to lower the after-tax cost of vessel construction and shipyard investment.

- **Establish Maritime Prosperity Zones (MPZs):** These geographically diverse zones are designed to use tax advantages to stimulate private and allied capital investment in maritime industries and waterfront communities.
- **Impose a Universal Fee:** The plan proposes a new infrastructure or security fee on all foreign-built commercial vessels calling at U.S. ports, assessed on the weight of imported tonnage. One estimate suggests a fee of 1 cent per kilogram could generate \$66 billion over ten years. Revenue would be directed to the Maritime Security Trust Fund.

Pillar II: Reform Workforce Education and Training

- **Tax Exemption for Mariners:** It recommends permitting U.S. merchant mariners serving on U.S.-flagged vessels on international routes to exclude their foreign-earned income from gross income, aiming to boost mariner retention.
- **Mariner Workforce Development:** The strategy includes expanding and modernizing training at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA) and State Maritime Academies and establishing a new Mariner Incentive Program (MIP) to aid in recruitment and retention.

Pillar III: Protect the Maritime Industrial Base

- **Close the "Cargo Loophole" with a Land Port Maintenance Tax:** Proposes a new tax on foreign-origin cargo that is offloaded in Canadian or Mexican ports and then transported by land into the U.S. This tax, potentially set at 0.125% of the cargo's value, is designed to mirror the existing Harbor Maintenance Tax (HMT) applied at seaports. The goal is to eliminate the cost advantage of bypassing U.S. ports, thereby incentivizing shippers to use U.S. maritime routes and increasing cargo for vessels calling at our nation's ports.
- **Strategic Commercial Fleet (SCF):** A new SCF would be established to provide financial support for the construction and operation of internationally trading U.S.-built vessels, helping them compete against subsidized foreign fleets.
- **Strengthened Cargo Preference:** The plan aims to expand and streamline enforcement of cargo preference laws for U.S. Government-impelled cargo.



- **New U.S. Maritime Preference Requirement (USMPR):** A proposal to require high-volume exporting economies to transport a gradually increasing percentage of their U.S.-bound containerized cargo on qualifying U.S. vessels.
- **Cargo Preference Three-Year Eligibility Rule:** Immediately implement reform to accelerate fleet growth.
- **Counter Foreign Competition:** Proposes actions to address unfair trade practices, particularly from China's state-supported maritime, logistics, and shipbuilding sectors. (More on USTR's findings)

Pillar IV: National Security, Economic Security, and Industrial Resilience

- **Increase the U.S.-Flag Fleet:** Explicitly aims to grow the fleet of U.S.-built and U.S.-flagged commercial vessels trading internationally.
- **Establish a Maritime Security Trust Fund:** Proposes a dedicated fund, insulated from the annual appropriations process, created to ensure consistent, long-term investment in shipbuilding, fleet expansion, and workforce development programs. Revenue would be generated from new fees and taxes, such as the Land Port Maintenance Tax and the universal fee on foreign-built ships.
- **Autonomous Vessels:** The plan recognizes the lack of a regulatory framework for autonomous vessels and recommends developing clear standards for manning, operations, safety, and liability to support future innovation.

Deregulatory Actions

- **Regulatory Relief:** A significant focus is placed on eliminating redundant, obsolete, or burdensome regulations. This includes reducing duplicative inspections, raising the monetary threshold for major marine casualty reporting, and streamlining compliance for permitting, credentialing, and vessel entry/clearance.
- **Streamline of Compliance Process:** Revise forms, systems, and regulation process for Merchant Mariner Credentials (MMC), expand underwater surveys in lieu of drydocking, and update government systems to ensure web access.



Implementation of Potential Legislative Proposals

To reiterate, the MAP itself does not impose binding requirements, it establishes policy direction. Future legislation, funding decisions, and agency rulemakings affecting U.S.-flag commercial shipping will be needed to carryout the MAP. The SHIPS for America Act of 2025 provides many of the legislative changes necessary to implement the MAP.

Topic	MAP	SHIPS Act	CSA Comments
Core Goal	Restore U.S. maritime dominance through a broad, four-pillared strategic vision.	Enact a comprehensive legislative framework to revitalize the U.S. Merchant Marine, shipbuilding, and workforce .	Both signal a powerful, top-down commitment to revitalizing the entire U.S. maritime ecosystem, creating a more stable and supportive operating environment.
Governance	Recommends strengthening interagency coordination.	Creates a Maritime Security Advisor in the White House and a Maritime Security Board to direct national strategy.	The SHIPS Act's proposal is more concrete and would give the maritime industry a permanent, high-level advocate within the executive branch, which is a significant positive.
Funding	Proposes a Maritime Security Trust Fund, funded by a universal fee on foreign-built ships (e.g., 1 cent/kg) and a Land Port Maintenance Tax.	Establishes a Maritime Security Trust Fund, funded by customs duties and targeted tonnage taxes (\$5/ton on adversary vessels + tiered surcharges for using adversary shipyards).	While providing a funding stream. The SHIPS Act's funding is a direct penalty on strategic competitors and those who use their shipyards. The MAP's universal fee would be a new cost for members operating foreign-flag vessels, while its Land Port Tax would benefit all



			vessels calling at U.S. ports. CSA remains opposed to this provision.
Fleet Growth	Aims to increase the number of U.S.-built and U.S.-flagged commercial vessels including the creation of a Strategic Commercial Fleet.	Creates the Strategic Commercial Fleet Program with a specific goal of 250 vessels. It details a competitive bidding process for long-term operating agreements with support payments.	Both provide a clear, actionable, and funded pathway for CSA members to expand their U.S.-flag fleets. The detailed mechanism, including the ability to bid as a team with a shipyard and use interim foreign built vessels, offers flexibility and a direct route to participation.
Shipbuilding Incentives	Proposes Maritime Prosperity Zones (modeled on Opportunity Zones) and expanding Capital Construction Fund to shipyard	Provides a 33% newbuild tax credit, a 25% shipyard investment tax credit, and modernizes Title XI (revolving fund), CCF, and CRF programs	The SHIPS Act's tax credits and financial program reforms are incentives that would directly lower the capital cost for CSA members to build new, modern, U.S.-flagged vessels in domestic yards.
Cargo Preference	Recommends "strengthening" preference requirements.	Mandates 100% of government cargo and phases in a 10% requirement for imports from China on U.S.-flag vessels, enforced by fines and a "Ship America Office."	The SHIPS Act would create a substantial and guaranteed pool of cargo for the U.S.-flag fleet, directly boosting revenue and viability for participating CSA members.



Regulatory Reform	Proposes a variety of EPA and USCG reforms to reduce repetitive and burdensome regulations.	Creates a Rulemaking Committee to align USCG rules with IMO standards and expands the Alternate Compliance Program (ACP) to all U.S.-flag vessels.	Both directly addresses a major operational pain point for U.S.-flag vessels in international trade, potentially reducing costs and complexity
Workforce	Proposes expanding education and modernizing academies and institutions contribution to the maritime labor pool.	Provides greater detail including mariners/shipyard workers eligible for Public Service Loan Forgiveness, authorizes \$1B+ for USMMA modernization, and adds other benefits like GI Bill eligibility.	Both address the critical maritime workforce shortage. The specific, tangible benefits in the SHIPS Act (loan forgiveness, academy funding) are powerful tools to attract and retain qualified American crew.