

## U.S. Maritime Administration Holds National Maritime Strategy Symposium



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On January 14-16, 2014, the U.S. Maritime Administration conducted a National Maritime Strategy Symposium at the Department of Transportation headquarters building in Washington, D.C. The central focus of the Symposium, which gathered government and civilian shippers, regulators, carriers and operators, and maritime labor, was the revitalization of the internationally trading U.S.-flag Merchant Marine. Much of the symposium focused upon steps to help reduce the U.S. cost disadvantage compared to open registries. However, many in the break-out sessions concluded that even with dramatically reduced tax and regulatory burdens, getting competitive commercial cargo onto U.S.-flag vessels will still require some kind of exporter/importer incentive such as a tax or export/import fee credit. Lastly, symposium participants focused upon new cargo opportunities that might arise through reservation of part or all of new LNG, LPG, or crude oil exports for carriage on U.S. flag vessels, or from an increase of Government cargo preference requirements to 100% across the board. The path forward toward increasing the percentage of U.S. trade carried on U.S. bottoms remains unclear, but MARAD and DOT leadership have indicated a strong commitment to carrying the process forward. Additional materials regarding the symposium will be posted on the MARAD website in coming days.

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