

Stephen M. Carmel
Maritime Administrator nominee
Opening statement, Oct. 22, 2025

Good morning, Chairman Cruz, Ranking Member Cantwell, and Members of the Committee. Thank you for allowing me to be here today. I am honored to appear before you as the nominee for the position of Maritime Administrator. Please permit me to introduce my wife, Alison—a Navy Veteran from a long line of Coast Guard officers—and our sons, John and Greg, who are here with me today.

I graduated from the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, Class of 1979, and went to sea immediately thereafter. I sailed steadily, earned my Master's license, and commanded ships that traveled to every corner of the world. My time at sea was marked by more highlights than I could recount here, but perhaps the most meaningful was my service in the Arctic—an experience that sparked a lifelong fascination with that region and inspired much of my later academic work.

After coming ashore, I held a variety of executive positions with Maersk Line, Limited—the U.S.-flag subsidiary of one of the world's largest shipping companies—and later became President of U.S. Marine Management, my current position, following our acquisition by Maritime Partners, the leading Jones Act provider of vessel leasing and construction financing.

I also returned to graduate school and collected a few extra initials behind my name. Throughout my shoreside career, my colleagues and I faced challenges ranging from two Middle East wars to the complex logistics of supporting operations in Afghanistan; revolts in Angola and

inland grain movements in Russia; piracy off Somalia's coast; and even an earthquake and nuclear disaster in Japan.

Those experiences taught me many things, but two lessons stand out. First, maritime strength depends on people—and it must be built long before a crisis occurs. Second, leadership is about execution, accountability, and partnership.

I have been fortunate to work, both at sea and ashore, alongside some of the finest men and women this country has to offer, and I am proud of all that we accomplished together.

Now, if given the honor of confirmation, it is time to take up a new challenge.

We are a formidable naval power, but we are not yet a true maritime power. For more than 150 years, we have searched for a maritime policy that works, even as our industrial capacity has steadily declined—both in our ability to carry our own commerce and to build the ships that do it. We have outsourced those capabilities and, with that, much of our independence.

A strong maritime sector is not nostalgia—it's strategy. It means resilient supply chains we control; credible logistics for our joint forces; good jobs across our coasts, rivers, and Great Lakes; and the freedom to move what America needs, when and where America needs it—under our own flag.

We have done hard things before. With this Committee's guidance, and in partnership with labor and industry, we can do them again. We will

not be the generation that stood on the sidelines and passively watched our noble industry die. We will be the generation that rebuilt it—stronger, smarter, faster, and ready.

If confirmed, I will work in a spirit of partnership to meet our challenges, uphold the traditions of my alma mater, and live by its motto: *Acta non verba*—deeds, not words.

Thank you, and I stand ready for your questions.