Statement of Robert Harvey
Nominee, U.S. Federal Maritime Commission
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
October 22, 2025

Chairman Cruz, Ranking Member Cantwell and members of the Committee, good morning and thank you for the opportunity to appear here before you today as a nominee to be Commissioner of the Federal Maritime Commission (FMC). I also want to thank your respective staff for all their efforts and the professionalism shown to me during the nomination process.

I would like to thank Commissioners Dye, Maffei, and Vekich for meeting with me during the confirmation process and for attending today's hearing. Most importantly, I would like to recognize my wife, Debra, who has been my law partner, is my life partner, and has fully supported me in my desire to return to public service. Finally, I would like to thank President Trump for the honor of nominating me to be a Commissioner of the FMC.

If confirmed, I will continue the important work of the FMC at this critical time for the United States ocean transportation system and supply chain.

I look forward to ensuring that FMC maintains a competitive and reliable international ocean transportation system and protects U.S. consumers, exporters and importers from unlawful, unfair, and deceptive ocean transportation practices.

For the past three years, I have been engaged in multiple economic development roles in Florida.

With 1300 miles of coastline, sixteen public seaports and seven cruise ports, I have gained an even greater appreciation for the maritime industry, supply chains, and port access, not only for Florida but the entire country.

While I am a proud Floridian, I was born, raised, and educated in Illinois.

The first water-borne commerce I ever saw was barge traffic, containing agriculture, coal and bulk goods, floating on the Des Plaines River, through the middle of my hometown of Joliet.

The first large bulk carrier I ever saw was a laker.

The Great Lakes shipping industry supports tens of thousands of jobs directly, and is a vital economic engine for the cities, towns, and people, of the region.

I will work to ensure fair conditions for the entire U.S. shipping industry.

I began my career with the United States Navy, where I served on active duty at Naval Station Great Lakes, Illinois, as a Navy Judge Advocate and Special Assistant U.S. Attorney. I also served on active duty as Senior Defense Counsel and Senior Trial Counsel at Naval Legal Service Office, Great Lakes.

After leaving active duty I served as a reservist with Amphibious Group 2, Little Creek, Virginia and U.S. Naval Forces Europe, London, United Kingdom.

The lesson learned from my time in the Navy is that economic security and national security are inseparable. U.S. national security protects our economic assets, including critical infrastructure, supply chains, port access, and international trade routes, from both traditional and emerging threats.

After leaving active duty I began my civilian law career in private practice in Illinois. After two years I had the opportunity to join startup Meridian VAT Reclaim North America in New York, New York, where I became Meridian's Senior Vice President of Operations & General Counsel. After Meridian was acquired in 1999, I served in various roles as in law, business, investment management, finance, and public service.

From 2015 to 2022, I was a Founding Partner of Jenks & Harvey LLP in West Palm Beach, Florida, where my practice was concentrated in securities litigation, arbitration, and regulation.

I returned to the public sector in November 2022 as the General Counsel of Enterprise Florida, Inc., Florida's principal economic development organization.

Today, I serve as President and Executive Director of the Florida Opportunity Fund, Inc. (FOF). FOF is a $180 million venture capital fund which invests in Florida-based, new technology companies. These investments have been crucial in supporting new businesses, creating jobs in Florida, and further diversifying the state's economy. FOF focuses on technology sectors that are strategic to Florida including artificial intelligence, life sciences, information technology, advanced manufacturing processes, aviation and aerospace, homeland security and defense, and cybersecurity, among other strategic areas.

Related to FMC's mission, FOF has invested in (1) cybersecurity/information technology companies that protect critical infrastructure; including vessels, ports and marine infrastructure; (2) companies that fuse real-time data with artificial intelligence to monitor maritime emissions and improve operational efficiency, at sea and ashore, and; (3) logistics companies providing multimodal last-mile delivery solutions, which improve visibility and reduce shipping time and cost.

FOF has begun to review investments in quantum solutions for the marine industry, enabling potential breakthroughs in route and fleet optimization, quantum sensing and navigation, secure quantum communication, and predictive maintenance and environmental modeling.

Finally, I also serve as the Executive Director of Florida Development Finance Corporation (FDFC). FDFC is the state authorized issuer of industrial revenue bonds. FDFC supports economic development by assisting for-profit and not-for-profit businesses with access to capital for project financing. The primary mechanism for accessing capital markets is tax-exempt and taxable bonds.

In the last two fiscal years, FDFC successfully facilitated the authorization and issuance of over $8.0 billion of tax-exempt, taxable, and private activity bonds, across a wide range of sectors, including transportation, solid waste, and healthcare.

FDFC is currently reviewing multiple projects where private activity bonds may be used for investment for infrastructure projects like ports, including docks, wharves, and related facilities, including commercial manufacturing.

If confirmed as a Commissioner of the FMC, I believe my over 35 years of diverse experience in the military, legal and regulatory affairs, business, investment and finance, technology, and economic development will allow me to positively contribute to FMC's vital mission.

In conclusion, Chairman Cruz, Ranking Member Cantwell, and members of the Committee, if given the opportunity and privilege of serving as a Federal Maritime Commissioner, I promise you that I will follow the statutory requirements of the law in a fair and unbiased manner. I also promise to respond to requests of this Committee as you fulfill your oversight responsibilities of the FMC.

Thank you.