

**STATEMENT OF MARK H. BUZBY  
NOMINEE FOR ADMINISTRATOR OF THE MARITIME ADMINISTRATION  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
BEFORE THE  
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE & TRANSPORTATION  
UNITED STATES SENATE  
26 July 2017**

Good morning, Chairman Thune, Ranking Member Nelson, and members of the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to present my qualifications for serving as our Nation's Administrator for the Maritime Administration at the Department of Transportation.

Joining me here today is my wife, Gina, who has stood alongside me selflessly for the past 21 years. She keeps me well-grounded and never *ever* allows me to take myself too seriously. She has also stood alongside military families during our Navy years as a tireless supporter of education and assistance to spouses, and continues in a mentorship role today. She was decorated by Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus with the Navy Distinguished Public Service Award for her outstanding efforts. My success is due in large part to her love and support.

The statutory mission of the Maritime Administration (MarAd) is to foster, promote and develop the Merchant Maritime industry of the United States in order to meet the Nation's economic and security needs, both now in the future. That is a tall order in today's constrained budget environment, yet it is a mission that nonetheless must be pursued. America is a maritime nation.

The other key role is to manage, on behalf of the Secretary of Transportation, the operation of our Nation's premiere training facility for future Merchant Marine officers – the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, and to support the efforts of our six State Maritime Academies. I desire to lead these missions, and I believe that I am qualified to do so.

My roots are in the Merchant Marine. I was destined to be a mariner, having been born and raised in Atlantic City, New Jersey. My first breath of air was salt air; I got my first boat at age 9; and I bent, or put on, my first set of dress blues at age 14 at Admiral Farragut Academy. I think you get the picture: I am proud to be an anchor-clanker; this is what I do, this is who I am.

After graduation from the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA) at King's Point, NY, in 1979, I served 34 years on active duty – much of it at sea -- with the U.S. Navy, retiring

in 2013. I was very fortunate growing up to be mentored by a group of relatives and close family friends who had all served our nation in uniform in time of war. Strength of character and sense of selfless service were common virtues of them all, and they proved a powerful example for me.

The merchant marine should be front and center in any discussion of transportation policy, because the movement of cargo by ship is critical to our economy, both domestically and internationally. Moreover, since World War II, the merchant marine is a key part of the Navy's ready reserve. This means we need U.S. flagged ships that are in good repair, we need efficient U.S. ports, and we need skilled mariners. My pledge is to do all I can to meet these three challenges.

If I am confirmed, one of my first priorities will be to get the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy squared away. This academy is too great an asset to become tainted because of the misconduct or bad judgment of a few. We will address these issues. We will ensure that Sea Year provides the essential learning experience that it is intended to and that all midshipmen will participate in this unique hands on learning experience, safely and confidently across a wide variety of ships. We will work to ensure that the academy is fully accredited, that the education received there is worthy of a U.S. service academy, and that its graduates are fully qualified as ship's officers to command ships, operate propulsion systems, and lead seafarers.

During my time commanding the U.S. Navy's Military Sealift Command, and now as President of the National Defense Transportation Association (NDTA), I have had the great fortune to work closely – almost daily - alongside the leaders in our Nation's maritime industry – including labor, owners and operators, and the government. I have strong working relationships with them, and we have worked tough issues in the past and have gotten things done.

If I am confirmed as the Maritime Administrator, please know that I will seek to build upon this trust to get things done. We have a motto at Kings Point: ACTA NON VERBA -- Deeds Not Words. It has been a part of me every day since I walked out the Academy's gates in 1979, and I pledge to you that it will continue to frame my actions as I go forward.

Again, I want to thank President Trump and Secretary Chao for their confidence in me by nominating me for this position. I hope I can earn your trust and confidence as well. I look forward to answering any questions that you may have. Thank you.