



## TESTIMONY OF

### ADMIRAL KEVIN E. LUNDAY COMMANDANT, U.S. COAST GUARD

ON

**“THE FLEET WE FUNDED: ASSESSING COAST GUARD FORCE LAYDOWN ON  
THE HEELS OF HISTORIC INVESTMENT”**

**BEFORE THE  
COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION –  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COAST GUARD, MARITIME, AND FISHERIES**

**January 29, 2026**

Chairman Sullivan, Ranking Member Blunt Rochester, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on the Coast Guard’s transformation and the historic results we are delivering for the American people.

As a vital instrument of national power, the U.S. Coast Guard controls, secures, and defends the U.S. border and maritime approaches, facilitates the safe and secure flow of commerce that is vital to economic prosperity and strategic mobility, and responds to crises and contingencies that may come without warning. As part of the Department of Homeland Security team protecting our Nation and as a military service and part of the Joint Force defending it, every action the Coast Guard takes delivers value through our statutory missions. The American people depend on the Coast Guard, and the Service provides unmatched return on investment, generating more than \$74 billion in social and economic value through cost avoidance – representing a 6-to-1 return on taxpayer investment.

Thanks to the strong leadership and support of President Trump, Secretary Noem, and this Congress, the Coast Guard is emerging from a readiness crisis that was decades in the making. In May 2025, Secretary Noem launched Force Design 2028, a bold blueprint to transform the Service into a more agile, capable, and responsive fighting force. Coupled with the capital investment passed by Congress and signed into law by the President of nearly \$25 billion in the Working Families Tax Cut, the Coast Guard is executing the most significant modernization and recapitalization in at least a century.

My top priorities are conducting our statutory missions to deliver value to the American people and transforming the Coast Guard by executing Force Design 2028, fueled by the historic capital investment to rebuild the readiness of the Service, starting with our workforce. As detailed in the first update on Force Design 2028 released on January 15, 2026, our remarkable mission success in 2025 is already proving the importance of Force Design 2028 and setting the course for even greater achievements in 2026.

In 2025, Coast Guard forces seized over 511,000 pounds of drugs, more than any year in the Service's history, and over three times the annual average – representing over 193 million potentially lethal doses and subsequently avoiding \$2.3 billion in healthcare costs. We achieved record-setting recruiting results, bringing in more than 6,000 active-duty and reserve enlisted members, our best recruiting year since 1991. And we conducted thousands of search and rescue cases, saving 5,220 lives and assisting 19,437.

Starting in March, we launched three major operations to secure the U.S. border. Through Operation Border Trident, we achieved operational control of the border against illegal immigration and drug smuggling in the California coastal region, increasing interdictions by 44 percent over 2024 levels. In August, we surged additional assets to the Eastern Pacific under Operation Pacific Viper, seizing over 100,000 pounds of narcotics in less than three months. And through Operation River Wall, we deployed assets and tactical teams to secure 260 river miles of the U.S. border along the Rio Grande River.

Last summer, the Coast Guard acquired Cutter *Storis*, the first icebreaker to join the fleet in over 25 years. Under Operation Frontier Sentinel, Cutters *Storis*, *Healy*, and *Waesche* intercepted and chased away five Chinese research vessels operating over the U.S. extended continental shelf in the Arctic, reflecting our enduring operations to protect U.S. sovereign rights.

Simultaneously, the Coast Guard facilitated the safe movement of over 1.8 billion tons of cargo, a 13 percent increase over 2024, through U.S ports and waterways and responded to catastrophic flooding events in Central Texas, Alaska, and the Pacific Northwest, rescuing over 290 people. In the past few weeks, Coast Guard elite tactical teams conducted high-profile boardings of “dark fleet” tankers, enforcing U.S. and customary international law with the Departments of Justice, State, and War. Across all our statutory missions, Coast Guard men and women continue to set a new standard for operational excellence.

Beyond our historic operational successes in 2025, the Coast Guard is moving at speed and scale to modernize our capabilities, employ cutting-edge technology, and invest in our people. In just seven months, we have obligated \$7.8 billion of Working Families Tax Cut funding to begin restoring readiness. By the end of this fiscal year, we will obligate over \$20 billion of that funding to deliver new cutters, boats, aircraft, shore infrastructure, and technology. Moving forward, significant, sustained increases in annual operating funds are necessary to crew, maintain, and operate these assets.

In the coming months, the Coast Guard will implement several significant structural changes and investments, including:

- Establishing a Deployable Specialized Forces Command;
- Expanding training center facility capacity;
- Enhancing maritime domain dominance through Coastal Sentinel;
- Rapidly identifying, testing, and acquiring new operational assets; and
- Reducing bureaucracy and revolutionizing how the Coast Guard organizes, trains, equips, and employs its forces.

Force Design 2028 is already delivering results. The Coast Guard is now stronger, more capable, and better prepared than it was a year ago. We will build on these successes in 2026 and beyond. We strongly support the bipartisan efforts to provide more direct civilian leadership, oversight and advocacy, with the establishment of a Coast Guard Service Secretary [*as passed in HR4275*], reporting to the Secretary of Homeland Security. These steps are essential to ensure enduring Coast Guard mission success for decades to come.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and for your continued support of the brave men and women of the Coast Guard.