

**New York State Maritime Technical Working Group (M-TWG)**  
**Meeting Summary**  
**July 28, 2026**

**Next Steps**

- **M-TWG members:** Complete the post-meeting [survey](#).
- **New York State Department of State (NYSDOS)/Cadmus:** Update meeting materials with full presentation slides and meeting summary via [nymtwg.com/meeting-summaries](https://nymtwg.com/meeting-summaries).
- **New York State Department of State (NYSDOS)/Cadmus:** Plan the Fall M-TWG meeting.

**Meeting Purpose**

To learn about the Maritime Administration's (MARAD) priorities on workforce development related to the U.S. Maritime Action Plan, discuss the 2-year M-TWG meeting plan, hear findings from the Remote Operating Centers side study, and share State and member updates.

**Summary**

**Overview of the U.S. Maritime Action Plan**

Dr. Sashi Kumar from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration (MARAD) provided an overview and history of MARAD's priorities on workforce development and how it has evolved over the years. Additionally, Dr. Kumar provided insights on the [U.S. Maritime Action Plan](#). The [Merchant Marine Act of 1936](#) provided the incentive for establishing qualified support and services to maritime training aspects and the creation of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy and the six state maritime academies which receive direct and indirect support. These academies supply over 800 U.S. Coast Guard credentialed entry-level deck and engineering officers. In 2018, the National Defense Authorization Act gave the authority to create the Centers of Excellence (COE). This program is a workforce training and education program for merchant mariners for inland and coastal waterways. In 2024, over 20,000 students attended COEs located on 50 campuses across 17 states and Guam. A list of COEs is available [here](#).

According to the [Maritime Workforce Working Group 2017 Report](#), there is a shortage of 1,800 seafarer qualified mariners to meet economic and national security needs. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the shortage of maritime workers became more severe due to the shift in workplace conditions. The number of ships and maritime workers needed has gone up over the past several decades, and there is a shortage of 100,000 officers by the end of this decade. Additionally, the [Maritime Security Program](#), [Tanker Security Program](#), and the [Cable Security Fleet](#) provide additional federal funds to ships available for security needs. MARAD hosted various workshops for stakeholders in the maritime sector to determine what needs attention. MARAD concluded that priorities could include better marketing and outreach for industry, investing in maritime safety and mental health, lowering the entry cost to the maritime sector, increasing pay in the sector and improving the quality of work life. To address these issues a

[Mariner Workforce Strategic Plan](#) was introduced. The number of credentialed mariners has increased but there is a significant problem in retaining mariners.

Under the Biden Administration, the United States Trade Representative investigation of shipping policies and practices by ship owners and shipping companies based in China occurred. In 2024, a bill was introduced to Congress called the Kelly-Waltz Act that included policy initiatives to strengthen the maritime sector. To strengthen this sector, the Trump Administration signed an executive order called [Restoring America's Maritime Dominance](#) on February 13, 2026. The [U.S. Maritime Action Plan](#) has 4 key pillars including rebuilding U.S. shipbuilding capacity and capabilities, workforce education and training, protect the maritime industrial base, and national security, economic security, and industrial resilience. This plan is still in the deliberating stage and need to be approved by Congress. During fiscal year 2027 the U.S. Maritime Action Plan will be subject to congressional action and authorized through Congress by the National Defense Authorization Act.

M-TWG members asked the following comments and questions:

- One member highlighted the economic scale and transport role of the tug and towboat industry, emphasizing that it deserves greater focus and inclusion in school curriculum. They voiced strong opposition to the Hudson River Protection Act and expressed frustration regarding anchor-dropping restrictions. Additionally, they stressed the need to address cabling issues and implement cargo tracking systems.
  - Dr. Kumar responded that while COE regulations play a key role in New England and coastal waterways, towing operators are not currently reporting any labor or workforce shortages. In fact, towing companies continue to serve as a primary credentialing pipeline for cadets graduating from state maritime academies.
- What does the COE do and what support does MARAD provide?
  - Dr. Kumar responded that this program was established to prepare non-officer trade workers for guaranteed jobs through apprenticeships, associate degrees, and Coast Guard credentials, backed by official MARAD certification. However, despite efforts, those financial resources have not yet materialized.
- The Maritime Action Plan focuses on connections. Where do you see States as having the greatest opportunity to support implementation of these objectives?
  - Dr. Kumar responded that multiple shipyard and training initiatives are currently developing across the country, though most remain in the planning stage in Texas, Florida, Louisiana, California, and South Carolina. Highlights include a new shipyard in Galveston, establish an offshore-focused maritime academy, and initiating greenfield investment for a new shipyard.
- Another member added that New York needs more space for ship building and repair. What can MARAD do to help secure these facilities?
  - Dr. Kumar responded that MARAD has a [Port Development Grant Program](#) and a [Small Shipyard Grant Program](#). These programs do not allow recipients to buy

new facilities and are best suited for small shipyards with less than 1,000 mariners.

- Peter Lion from NYSERDA added that NYSERDA can also discuss additional programs.

### **M-TWG Update: Remote Operating Centers for Autonomous Vessel Applications**

Matthew Cunningham from WSP provided an update on the small add-on study on Remote Operating Centers (ROCs). The purpose of this study is to examine the role of Remote Operating Centers in supporting autonomous vessels for offshore wind infrastructure and evaluate how Remote Operating Centers function as the central hub where most vessel oversight, manning, and operational decision-making occur. ROCs are land-based command hubs that monitor, supervise, and pilot autonomous and semi-autonomous maritime assets, relocating human expertise from vessel to shore. A draft will be available for comment in August 2026.

#### **Key Findings:**

- Facility Siting: Siting reflects operational priorities: port-integrated for mission alignment; distributed for resilience and scalability; academic for training and R&D.
- Infrastructure Baseline: Communications, power, cybersecurity, and redundancy are baseline requirements. Layered comms (fiber + satellite + cellular) are needed.
- Workforce Development: Brings together maritime and technical competencies. No unified U.S. ROC certification framework currently exists; the UK's operator certification is a case study.
- Governance and Funding: Requires cross-agency coordination: U.S. Coast Guard, MARAD, Marine Minerals Administration (formerly known as Bureau of Ocean Energy Management), ports, utilities, and workforce institutions. International examples bundle funds from a variety of public and private sources, helping achieve the objectives of multiple stakeholders.

### **Member Updates**

M-TWG members provided relevant updates:

- Equinor continues to receive turbine components at the South Brooklyn Marine Terminal and final trenching and jointing commences on the Submarine Export Cable.
- MARAD shared information on trainings and webinars including the [Virtual Ready Reserve Force Ship Repair Industry Day](#), register [here](#), [US Marine Highway Grant Program](#), and the [Small Modular Nuclear Reactors Request for Information](#) (RFI).
- United States Coast Guard shared the proposed rule for [Anchorages; Port of New York](#) is open for public comment and closing on August 7, 2026.
- NYS Department of Environmental Conservation is planning and assessing priorities for New York's Ocean Action Plan (OAP). Complete the [survey](#) to provide feedback on OAP actions by July 31, 2026.

## Relevant State Updates

Peter Lion from NYSERDA provided updates on ongoing offshore wind initiatives in New York State.

- The second round of the [Port Infrastructure Request for Proposals \(RFP\)](#) is open. Individuals focused on capital expenditures associated with the build out and port assets are encouraged to apply, however this is a multipurpose RFP. The due date for submission is August 20, 2026.
- An [Alternative Fuel Production in New York](#) RFI is open. The goal of this RFI is to collect input on how to design RFPs for pilot programs to scale alternative fuels in the maritime industry. Alternative fuels may include renewable fuels, methanol, and liquified natural gas. This RFI is continuously open and has no due date.
- The [Truck Voucher Incentive Program](#) currently has available funds for the electrification of off-road vehicles and equipment operating in ports. This program can cover 35% of the cost to electrify these vehicles including class 3-8 zero emission vehicles, electric non-road equipment, and transit buses.

An M-TWG member asked the following question:

- Are small modular reactors included in the Alternative Fuel Production in New York RFI?
  - Peter Lion responded that this fuel source is not currently included but he believes there is room to include that fuel source in the RFI.
    - The member who posed the question added that this is one of MARAD's priorities for ship propulsion and land side to provide power to ports.

## Small group Discussion on 2-year M-TWG Meeting Plan

Laura McLean from NYSDOS recapped the feedback on the potential deliverables discussed in the Spring M-TWG meeting. The purpose of revisiting this topic is to finalize feedback and achieve consensus on deliverables the M-TWG wants to achieve over the next 2 years.

Paddy Loughlin from NYSDOS provided additional context and framing around maritime education and early career opportunities, highlighting the ecosystem of Maritime Academic Institutions in the Northeast (7 total), the contribution New York's ocean economy, and provided example strategies. The [Michigan Maritime Strategy](#) released in early 2026 serves as a 10-year plan that focuses on 6 integrated goal areas. Michigan is investing in several maritime programs including the Michigan Statewide Infrastructure Workforce Plan, the Michigan Maritime Manufacturing Initiative, the Port Facility Grant Program, the Fresh Coast Maritime Challenge, the Michigan Industry Driven Skills Training Program, and the Manufacturing and Engineering Education Reimagined for All. These programs can serve as inspiration for steps our region could take to advance maritime workforce development.

Members were asked to participate in small breakout groups to provide feedback on the 2-year M-TWG meeting plan and the potential deliverables. M-TWG members reported the following from their breakout groups:

- Group 1: Key priorities focusing on communicating funding and training opportunities, such as the Federal DOT grants and state port development support. Action items can

include a quick reference sheet, while inventorying working waterfronts to evaluate shipyard repair capacity, facilities, and workforce readiness for New York's evolving energy needs. Additionally, the initiative highlights New York State's effort to advance offshore wind pre-development and de-risk early project stages by prioritizing site characterization work and assessing vessel availability.

- Group 2: Key priorities are centered on advancing workforce development, leveraging grant funding, and protecting and modernizing working waterfronts. Partner with the Maritime Association of the Port of NY and NJ to create a master inventory of training programs and apprenticeships and to market these jobs to active job seekers. Use state or private resources to meet federal grant matching requirements and target Port Infrastructure Development Programs. Safeguard working shorelines from residential encroachment, plan for long term port developments, and advocate for updating federal dredging depth authorizations to accommodate modern, deeper draft vessels.
- Group 3: Public education and engagement around offshore wind, strategic workforce development targeting youth, and expert knowledge sharing across the maritime sector should be prioritized. Use operational data from projects like South Fork Wind to create factual resources and leverage predevelopment funds to sustain community outreach to maintain momentum and combat local disinformation. Engage K-12 schools and maritime academies to promote viable maritime trades and careers. Additionally, support guest speakers, such as maritime professors or ship building experts, to deepen technical insights and inform broader workforce initiatives.

Members participated in an activity to gain further insight into their feedback on M-TWG's potential deliverables.

Members were asked to rank the top 3 following deliverables and actions.

The potential deliverables were ranked as follows:

1. OSW Ready: Discuss NYS efforts to advance offshore wind predevelopment
2. Maritime Workforce: Evaluate shipyard development needs (research project)
3. OSW Ready: Fact sheets on industry benefits
4. Working Waterfronts: Discussions on funding opportunities, key findings from NYS Ports Study
5. Working Waterfronts: Case Studies on multi-use ports and vessels
6. Working Waterfronts: Guest speaker on federal policies
7. Maritime Workforce: Inventory of maritime training programs and apprenticeships
8. OSW Ready: Learn more about NYS transmission (article VIII) process and guidance

Is there another action or deliverable that we missed that you want to prioritize instead?

- A working waterfronts study that can identify the value of working waterfronts and ways to save working waterfronts from redevelopment.
- Educating K-12 students on maritime workforce from sea going to shipyard, working waterfront, etc.

## Meeting Participants

|                   |            |                                                           |
|-------------------|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Alicia            | Artessa    | NYOWA                                                     |
| Katie             | Axt        | WSP                                                       |
| Joel              | Bernosky   | NYSDOS                                                    |
| Commander Timothy | Bonner     | United States Coast Guard – Sector NY                     |
| Rhianna           | Bozzi      | New York Department of Environmental Conservation         |
| Colleen           | Brust      | New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection         |
| Matthew           | Cunningham | WSP                                                       |
| Mark              | Cutter     | United States Coast Guard, District 1                     |
| Kari              | Dahlquist  | US Department of Transportation, Maritime Administration  |
| Melanie           | Gárate     | CBI                                                       |
| Nick              | Guariglia  | New York Offshore Wind Alliance (NYOWA)                   |
| Eric              | Johansson  | Maritime Association of the Port of NY & NJ               |
| Dr. Shashi        | Kumar      | US Department of Transportation, Maritime Administration  |
| Julia             | Laskaris   | Cadmus Group                                              |
| Julia             | Lewis      | Equinor                                                   |
| Peter             | Lion       | NYSERDA                                                   |
| Paddy             | Loughlin   | NYSDOS                                                    |
| Stephen           | Lyman      | NY Maritime Association of the Port of NY & NJ            |
| James             | Mahlmann   | United New York Sandy Hook Pilots' Association, President |
| Laura             | McLean     | NYSDOS                                                    |
| Rick              | Robins     | Community Offshore Wind                                   |
| Amanda            | Rutherford | US Department of Transportation, Maritime Administration  |
| Matthew           | Starace    | United States Coast Guard – Sector NY                     |
| Max               | Taffet     | New York City Economic Development Corporation            |