

**MARINE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL
(MTSNAC)
MEETING SUMMARY
DECEMBER 5-6, 2006 - JACKSONVILLE, FL**

The Marine Transportation System National Advisory Council (MTSNAC) met on December 5-6, 2006 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Jacksonville, FL. The Maritime Administrator, Sean T. Connaughton, on behalf of the Secretary of Transportation, welcomed both the old and the new Council members and explained that the Department and the Maritime Administration are focusing on how to best leverage available resources to address congestion throughout the Nation's freight system.

A comprehensive overview of the Inland Waterways System and its value and importance to the Nation's MTS was presented to the Council. Council members will review this presentation and provide input and comments so that it can be edited and presented to the Council for its approval at the next meeting.

The Council was briefed on the recent work that its Intermodal Team has done on data and its role in measuring the system. The Team recommended that Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the Marine Transportation System (MTS) be developed and that these indicators should be consistent throughout all transportation modes. The Team suggested that the role of the public sector should be to encourage private sector investment in the transportation system and recommended that the Maritime Administration should more actively collect MTS data.

Mr. Frank McArdle, a commissioner on the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission, addressed the group. This commission, which was set up by SAFETEA-LU legislation, is charged with the review and examination of the Nation's entire surface transportation system. Mr. McArdle stressed the critical need to get port issues on the commission's agenda and suggested that MTSNAC would be a good source of input for the commission as it completes its work by mid-2007.

The impact of the planned Panama Canal expansion was also discussed by the Council. Although the expansion brings a number of benefits to the international maritime and trade communities, it also presents challenges to U.S. East Coast ports who will handle potentially larger vessels that transit the expanded canal.

The Council's Emission Reduction Task Force briefed the group on its efforts to develop creative financing mechanisms to retrofit or replace environmentally non-compliant trucks in the Los Angeles/Long Beach, CA port complex with more environmentally compliant vehicles. The task force will continue its work and present its recommendations to the Council by the next meeting.

Four MTSNAC regional reports were presented – Great Lakes, California, Gulf of Mexico, and the South Atlantic. The Council also agreed that better information sharing and more focused MTS education efforts are needed, and recommendations to address this will be discussed at the next meeting.