**U.S. Committee on the Marine Transportation System**

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**PUBLIC STATEMENT TO THE**

**MARITIME TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (MTSNAC)**

Good morning, Ms. Wieland and members of the Committee. For the record, my name is Heather Gilbert. On behalf of Ms. Helen Brohl, Executive Director of the U.S. Committee on the Marine Transportation System (CMTS), and Major General Scott Spellmon, the current CMTS Sub-Cabinet Coordinating Board Chair and Deputy Commanding General for Civil and Emergency Operations at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, we would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you and the new members on your selection to MTSNAC. We know that you will all represent the maritime industry and its needs for a safer, secure, and more efficient marine transportation system or MTS.

Formed in 2005 and chaired by the Secretary of Transportation, the CMTS is a Federal interagency policy coordinating committee that assesses, makes recommendations regarding, and promotes Federal policies that impact the MTS. Over 25 different Federal agencies participate in the CMTS, including the Maritime Administration, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and Federal Maritime Commission, to name a few.

The CMTS developed the *National Strategy for the Marine Transportation System: Channeling the Maritime Advantage, 2017-2022[[1]](#footnote-1)*, which provides strategic guidance to the Federal interagency partnership under five priority areas: optimizing system performance, enhancing navigation safety, supporting maritime security, advancing energy innovation and development, and facilitating infrastructure investment.

Under the Chairmanship of Major General Spellmon, the CMTS continues to implement those items in our strategy, and I’d like to take a moment to highlight a few resources developed in the last year through this robust partnership. These include:

* *2017 Hurricane Season: Recommendations for a Resilient Path Forward for the Marine Transportation System[[2]](#footnote-2).* This report provides an overview of the impacts to U.S. ports and the MTS during the 2017 hurricane season and identifies best practices and lessons learned for Federal agencies.
* *Enhancing the Accessibility and Usability of Automatic Identification System (AIS) Data[[3]](#footnote-3).* This report highlights the value of AIS information, summarizes current Federal capacity and applications of AIS information, breaks down the challenges of current AIS accessibility and usability, and proposes near-term recommendations to address some of the identified challenges.
* An update of the CMTS *“Ten-Year Projection of Vessel Activity in the U.S. Arctic,”* which will identify drivers and project regional activity through 2030,will soon be out for public comment.

This coming August, the Sub-Cabinet Coordinating Board Chair will rotate from the Department of Defense to the Department of Commerce, where it is expected that a representative from NOAA will assume the chairmanship. We welcome the opportunity for the NOAA designee, as the 2019-2020 Coordinating Board Chair, to share CMTS priorities at the next MTSNAC meeting.

That concludes my remarks. Thank you, Ms. Wieland, Ms. Rutherford, and members of the Committee for this opportunity to provide remarks at today’s meeting and I thank you for the work you are doing in service of a stronger maritime Nation.

1. <https://www.cmts.gov/downloads/National_Strategy_for_the_MTS_October_2017.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.cmts.gov/downloads/CMTS_RIAT_2017Hurricanes.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://www.cmts.gov/downloads/Accessibility_and_Usability_of_AIS_Data.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)