

WBAL-TV

Maersk returns to Port of Baltimore

[\(Please click here for video\)](#)

An old friend of the Helen Delich Bentley Port of Baltimore returns after leaving almost 20 years ago.

Federal, state and local officials announced Wednesday the return of the Maersk group, which has a special tradition with the Port of Baltimore. In 1928, its first ship made a maiden voyage to the Far East, shipping auto parts.

Now, after leaving the port in 1996, the world's largest container shipping company is coming back.

"This is a huge day for port, the city of Baltimore, the state of Maryland and our partners at Maersk. The global shipping industry is watching Baltimore," Maryland Transportation Secretary Pete Rahn said.

"This is a great day for Maryland and for Maersk. It represents a launch of an important partnership in the state and the industry leader in Maersk," Lt. Gov. Boyd Rutherford said.

Maersk Vice President David Zimmerman said it all came down to customer demand and the perfect facility.

"They want to move more cargo via the East Coast. They want reliability and they want different alternatives to some of the other ports, so Baltimore fits all of those things," Zimmerman said.

Maersk will operate three weekly container services, bringing in an estimated 31,000 new containers per year, with routes to the Far East, Mediterranean and northern Europe with plans to grow if all goes well.

The Port of Baltimore was also attractive because it can handle ships that can pass through the Panama Canal.

Last year was a record year at the port, which saw almost 30 million tons of cargo pass through. With this move, 2015 is looking even better, according to shipping officials.

Someone who's very excited to see Maersk back is Bentley, who remembers all too well when the company left.

"It's important if you want to stay in the business," Bentley said. "Maersk is No. 1 in world, Mediterranean shipping is No. 2. They now have an alliance, so now we have both the first and second."

Port officials said Baltimore is the 10th most productive port in the world, and with this move, it's possible in the future Baltimore could someday break the top five.

State officials said business at the Port of Baltimore generates about 14,630 direct jobs, while about 108,000 jobs in Maryland are linked to port activities. The port is responsible for \$3 billion in personal wages and salary, and more than \$300 million in state and local taxes.

The Baltimore Sun

Maersk Line resumes service to Baltimore

[\(Click here for video\)](#)

Maryland officials welcomed the blue-hulled ships of the giant Maersk Line back to the port of Baltimore on Wednesday after an absence of nearly two decades.

A delegation led by Lt. Gov. Boyd K. Rutherford gathered under Seagirt Marine Terminal's four soaring white cranes to hail the renewal of a partnership that is expected to bring a surge in the port's container ship traffic.

"As the port succeeds, Maryland succeeds, and now Maersk is here and is going to link that success to the success of our state," said Rutherford, who was filling in for Gov. Larry Hogan, who was undergoing chemotherapy treatment for cancer.

The lieutenant governor was joined by Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, Maryland Transportation Secretary Pete Rahn, port administrator Jim White and several members of the General Assembly. None of Maersk's huge container ships was in port for the occasion, but port officials said the line is bringing three ships weekly from the Far East, Northern Europe and the Mediterranean Sea.

The Maryland Port Administration estimated that Maersk, which quietly resumed calling on the port in early February, would bring an added 31,000 container units to the port per year. Maersk, based in Denmark, is the world's largest shipping line, handling about 15 percent of global container shipments.

Maersk ships once called at Baltimore port terminals more than 120 times a year, but the line's departure in the late 1990s marked an end to the port's aspirations to be a major container shipping center as rivals New York and Norfolk grew.

White said the port wants to recapture more of the line's business.

"We view this as the first step in getting Maersk back," he said. "We're hoping to get it all back. We want global services coming through Maryland."

"This is a homecoming to us," said David Zimmerman, Maersk's vice president for North American sales. "We're delighted to be back."

The agreement with Maersk represents a takeaway of business from rival ports, White said.

"We know that other ports in close proximity are having congestion problems," the port director said. "They want that ship moving. We can turn a ship quicker than any port in the U.S."

The port, which bears the name of former Rep. Helen Delich Bentley, was recognized recently by the Journal of Commerce as the nation's most efficient.

Maersk's return also reflects changes in the shipping trade since the line left Baltimore, White said. Container ships are much larger now, carrying three to four times as many containers, making it more economical to make the run up the Chesapeake Bay to unload in a port closer to consumers.

"Now the economy of scale has changed completely," he said.

That trend would continue, White said, with the expected opening of a widened Panama Canal, which will bring more supersize cargo ships from Asia to the East Coast. With 50-foot deep channels, Baltimore is one of the few ports on the East Coast that can accommodate them.

Maersk's ties with Baltimore date to 1928, but the relationship has been tumultuous in recent decades.

In 1991, in what then-Gov. William Donald Schaefer called "a historic day for the port of Baltimore," the state and the Danish company signed a 10-year agreement that was then the longest lease for any shipping line in the port's history.

The contract came when the Baltimore port was struggling to compete with Norfolk, Va., New York and other rivals, but hopes that Maersk would spur a revitalization were dashed within a few years.

In the mid-1990s, Maersk began cutting back its more than 120 annual calls in Baltimore, prompted in part by the port's 8 1/2-hour distance from the open sea.

In January 1995, Maersk consolidated its South American service in Norfolk, cutting its Baltimore traffic by 25 percent. Maersk reinstated that service a few months later, but a pattern of here-today, gone-tomorrow announcements was set in motion that prevailed for years.

After Maersk forged an alliance with Sea-Land Service Inc. in 1996, the shipping line suspended the South American service again. Later that year, it canceled its runs from Baltimore to the Middle East and India.

The moves left Baltimore with 40 Maersk calls a year, and port officials shifted to a strategy that de-emphasized the container business in favor of cargoes such as paper products, construction machinery and automobiles in which it has become a dominant player in recent decades.

The port and Maersk renegotiated their contract in 1997, agreeing to a schedule of about 30 calls a year. Even that reduced business soon petered out. But Maryland's courtship of Maersk continued.

Maryland officials put together an economic package worth hundreds of millions of dollars in an effort to persuade Maersk to locate a giant cargo terminal at the Dundalk Marine Terminal. Hopes ran high after the shipping line rejected New York's initial offer. But in the end, Baltimore's promise of a deeper channel and lower labor costs could not beat its rival's proximity to the nation's largest consumer market.

Baltimore port officials renewed their interest in luring Maersk back after forming a public-private partnership with Ports America Chesapeake in 2009 to deepen Seagirt's berths to accommodate larger container ships. In 2013, Maersk entered a partnership with Mediterranean Shipping Co. that saw its cargo start to return to Baltimore, where MSC is the largest carrier.

Since Maersk left, Baltimore has attained the nation's No. 1 ranking in several trade categories, including its handling of cars and farm machinery and imports of sugar and aluminum. But until recently its share of the lucrative container market has lagged, and it now ranks 13th in the category among U.S. ports.

White said the new Maersk deal will not move Baltimore far up the list immediately, though it could improve in 2016 and 2017.

"When you're dealing with containers, you creep your way up the list," White said.

Rutherford and Rahn presented the deal as an example of how Hogan has made Maryland "open for business." However, the port's efforts to lure Maersk back were built largely on initiatives of past leaders.

Crucial to the new container business is the public-private partnership, negotiated under Gov. Martin O'Malley, that expanded Seagirt without having to depend on an estimated \$650 million from the state's then-depleted Transportation Trust Fund.

And Bentley recalled that in 1998 she secured money in Congress to dredge the Chesapeake Bay channel to the 50-foot depth needed by today's giant ships.

"Your big ships ... are going to be coming from China to the U.S., and Baltimore is ready because I got it through," she said.

Rawlings-Blake, who came directly from an event to protest Hogan's cancellation of the \$2.9 billion Red Line transit project, listened to remarks by representatives of his administration.

When she spoke, her praise of Baltimore's resilience appeared to carry a double meaning.

"We might have been down, but we're not out," she said, declining to answer questions afterward.

The Washington Post

Md. lieutenant governor no longer just a behind-the-scenes guy

Maryland Lt. Gov. Boyd Rutherford's new role as his boss's stand-in was on full display Wednesday, when he took the lead in welcoming a major shipping company back to the Port of Baltimore.

Still his cautious self, Rutherford celebrated the return of the Denmark-based Maersk Line to the state. Carefully reading remarks, he said: "This is a great day for Maryland and for Maersk. It represents the launch of an important partnership between the state and an industry leader in Maersk. Our great port is a critical economic asset for Maryland and today reaffirms that."

Rutherford, a lawyer and career bureaucrat, has largely defined his political career as a behind-the-scenes guy who enjoys poring over documents looking for governmental waste.

But his role changed with the recent disclosure by Gov. Larry Hogan (R) that he has stage 3 non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. On Wednesday, Hogan completed his fifth and final day of a first round of an intensive chemotherapy regimen. That meant that Rutherford, who has filled in for Hogan a handful of times since the June 22 announcement, was at center stage again.

Hogan was expected home late Wednesday and back in the office Thursday, Rutherford said.

Almost taking a page from Hogan's playbook, Rutherford opened his remarks with a small joke. He pointed out a faux pas made by Maryland Transportation Secretary Pete K. Rahn, who announced himself as the secretary of transportation for New Mexico, the state where he previously worked.

"Wait until I tell the governor you called us 'New Mexico,'" Rutherford said as the crowd burst into laughter. "I know — the weather's the same."

Rutherford then pulled out his tablet and turned his attention to one of Hogan's signature slogans from last year's gubernatorial campaign: making Maryland "open for business."

"The governor and I ran on making the state more business-friendly, and that is what we are setting out to do," he said. "That's why we're so excited to welcome the world's largest container-shipping company back to the Port of Baltimore."

Later, Rutherford, who at times appeared a little uncomfortable, slipped on his own words, mistakenly referring to Hogan as Robert L. Ehrlich, the last Republican governor in Maryland who left office eight years ago.

Rutherford served as secretary of General Services in that administration.

Rutherford seemed out of place, trying to adjust to his new role even as attendees rushed to his side to take pictures.

“I know the governor wishes he could be here,” Rutherford told the audience of elected officials and business executives. “I didn’t get a chance to speak to him today. I spoke to him yesterday, and he sounded like typical Larry. He was happy, getting a lot of work done. . . . He’s still engaged. He’ll be back in his home tonight, and I expect to see him tomorrow in the office.”

Hogan said on social media Wednesday that he is “doing great” and continuing to work from the hospital. As he started his fifth day of a regimen of around-the-clock chemotherapy, Hogan said he has conducted meetings, made “tons of calls, caught up on paperwork, reviewed recommendations, made decisions, appointed several hundred individuals and reviewed proposed budget reductions in every agency.”

Hogan revealed his cancer diagnosis last week during a hastily called news conference, adding that he plans to remain governor and would continue working and making decisions. He also said that Rutherford would occasionally fill in for him.

“Boyd has my back. There’s no question about that,” Hogan said at the time. “He is going to step up and do even more, I guess. He’s going to fill in at the Board of Public Works, he’s going to have to fill in for me on some other meetings, as will our entire Cabinet. They’re going to step up and do more things and fill in when I can’t be there.”

Last week, Rutherford chaired the meeting of the state Board of Public Works, a three-member panel of the state treasurer, comptroller and governor that reviews and approves major state expenditures. During the meeting, Rutherford, who has said he enjoys the “nerdy” world of procurement, relayed concerns that the governor has also expressed during the meetings about awarding no-bid contracts and extending contracts for years on end.

On Tuesday, Rutherford attended the Maryland Municipal League convention in Ocean City.

Even though he is a stand-in, Rutherford is still serving in the capacity of lieutenant governor. He has not been given the authority to act or make decisions on the governor’s behalf.

There have been only two occasions when that transfer of power has been given to Rutherford since Hogan took office in January.

The first was last month, when Hogan left on a 12-day trade mission to Asia. The next was June 16, when the governor was under anesthesia for a bone-marrow biopsy.

Rutherford said he continues to sit in on meetings, deliberating with Hogan and senior officials about the running of the government.

The biggest change is he has less free time.

“It’s been more events,” he said. “Instead of three evenings, it’s been five. Maybe last week it was seven.”

The Daily Record

Port of Baltimore lands a big load

By: Katelyn Newman

With light blue-gray containers stacked behind them, elected officials from Maryland and the city officially welcomed the largest container shipping company in the world, Maersk Line, to the Port of Baltimore.

“The global shipping industry is watching Baltimore. I think they got Governor Hogan’s message that Maryland is open for business,” said Lt. Gov. Boyd Rutherford. “Our great port is a critical economic asset for Maryland, and today proved that.”

The company officially started serving Baltimore in March and it plans to bring 31,000 more containers through the port per year.

Its addition gives the port more momentum and potential for increased international business as the Panama Canal expansion project is completed in the next year, Rutherford said.

Richard Scher, director of communications for the Port of Baltimore, said that the port’s recent infrastructure improvements, such as its new super-sized cranes and 50-foot deep container berth, have increased its ability to cater to the needs of some of the biggest ships in the world as it moves about 40 containers per hour per crane.

“These international container shipping lines are certainly getting wind of what the Port of Baltimore has been doing to elevate its status as a major container port,” Scher said.

Generating more than 14,000 direct jobs and about 108,000 associated jobs throughout Maryland, the Port of Baltimore is one of the state’s top economic engines, Scher said. The addition of Maersk is expected to increase both revenue and job opportunities for the city and state.

“This port delivers for Baltimore and for our region,” said Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake. “We’ve been a part of a great partnership to provide jobs, to provide opportunities, and to make a wave for the future of the city. We need it now more than ever.”

“I don’t know if there’s a stronger asset that we have in the City of Baltimore than the port,” Rawlings-Blake said.

The first Maersk liner departed from the city’s port in 1928 headed for the Far East, said David Zimmerman, vice president of North American sales for Maersk. It was last in Baltimore in 1996, and this new relationship marks the first time since then that Maersk vessels are coming to the Port of Baltimore.

“This is a homecoming for us — we’re delighted to be back,” said Zimmerman, who was presented with a Pride of Baltimore ship model from the port and state to celebrate the company’s new business deal with Maryland.

The increased amount of goods coming through the port will not affect the prices of the goods for state consumers, Scher said.

The addition of Maersk means the port is now served by all four of the largest container shipping firms in the world. Other major international shipping companies that use the port include CMA CGM, MSC and Evergreen.