



*Maryland Port Administration  
Open Session Meeting Minutes, #427  
Tuesday, April 7, 2026*

**MEETING DATE & LOCATION**

The Four Hundred and Twenty-Seventh Session of the Maryland Port Commission was called to order at 9:09 a.m. on April 7, 2026, by Acting Secretary, Kathryn Thomson. The Commission met in Open Session from 9:09 a.m. until 9:48 a.m. in the Stanton Room, 20th floor, World Trade Center, 401 E. Pratt Street, Baltimore, MD 21202.

**ATTENDANCE**

**Chairman and Officials:**

Acting Secretary Thomson and Commissioners Barber, Brewer\*, Neuman\*, Richardson, Roberts, and Webb.

**Executive Members:**

Samantha Biddle (Deputy Secretary), Jonathan Daniels (Executive Director), Brian Miller (Deputy Executive Director, Operations & Logistics), Robert Munroe (Deputy Executive Director, Administration and Environment), Matthew Wypyski (Deputy Executive Director, Commercial Development), Phil Whaling (Assistant Attorney General, Deputy Principal Counsel).

**Directors:**

Bradley Smith (Director of Maritime Commercial Management & Strategic Initiatives), Cindy Burman (Director of Cruise Marketing and Business Services), Dominic Scurti (Director of Planning), Holly Miller (Director, Office of Navigation, Innovation & Stewardship), Jennifer Guthrie (Director of the Office of Government Relations and External Affairs), John Boden (Director of Human Resources), Kathleen Pickett-Bowen (Director of Security), Melody Countess (Chief Financial Officer & Treasurer), Richard Scher (Director of Communications), Ryan Barry (Director of Operations), Steve Johnson (Director of Engineering), Tracy Pinder (Director of Internal Audit), Trisha O'Neal\* (Director of Procurement), William Richardson (Director of the Environment), Philip Whaling (Deputy Principal Counsel).

**Affiliates:**

Adam Lance (Classification, Compensation, & Recruitment Manager), Bradley Smith (Director of Maritime Commercial Management & Strategic Initiatives), Daren Dean (Manager, Maritime Management), Daren Swift (Deputy Director, NIS), Nick Porter (Business Development Manager).

**Staff:**

Marvis Harden (Special Assistant to the Executive Director), and Paul Wainaina (Office of Information Security and Technology).

**Guest and Press:**

Hayes Gardner\* (Baltimore Banner), James Bast\* (Seafarers International Union Representative)

\*Attended via Teams/phone

## **APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES**

Commissioner Richardson moved to approve the Open and Closed Session Minutes of the Four Hundred and Twenty-Sixth Maryland Port Commission (MPC) meeting. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion, and the Commission voted unanimously to approve the Open and Closed Session Minutes.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE, Jonathan Daniels, Executive Director**

Mr. Daniels noted that the New York Fed's recent report showed that increasing supply chain pressures point towards increased inflation with the inflationary pressures resembling those during the pandemic in December 2021. The war with Iran and the uncertainty of the Administration's tariff program are viewed as the primary drivers.

The Port of Baltimore cargo numbers are mixed. Mr. Dominic Scurti will provide a presentation on 2025 cargo statistics which show flattening in previously strong areas and strength in other areas. The statistics show softening in the high-and-heavy construction and farm equipment sector which is consistent with what is being reported nationally. Farmers are pulling back on purchases of expensive farm equipment and facing cost pressures with the rising cost of fertilizer. The Association of Equipment Manufacturers reported that sales of big-ticket items like tractors and combines were down between 30% and 40% in the U.S. in March compared to a year ago.

Meanwhile, the container numbers continue to be strong with March 2026 being the 4<sup>th</sup> busiest month ever with 110K TEUs. The diversity of cargo at the Port of Baltimore allows it to weather downturns in certain commodities as other categories are steady or increase.

Construction on the Howard Street Tunnel Project (HSTP) will be completed later this month and will provide double stack capabilities to the upper Midwest and beyond. MPA has met with and had conversations with customers to discuss the Port's increased ability to serve the region more efficiently, including with customers who now have the option to shift cargo from the Gulf Coast to Baltimore to more efficiently reach end users in states like Minnesota and Wisconsin.

On Thursday, April 9, a groundbreaking ceremony will be held to kick off the construction of a new agriculture export facility at the Seagirt Marine Terminal. When it comes online in August 2026, the facility will have the capacity to load up to 200 containers per week and will allow for more efficient export operations connecting Maryland farmers with international markets.

Mr. Daniels, Mr. Wypyski and Ms. Burman will attend the SeaTrade Cruise Global Conference in Miami next week, which will provide the opportunity for face-to-face meetings with RCL to finalize the details of the new agreement with RCL for a seasonal service commencing in 2027. MPA continues to pursue additional cruise lines to increase the utilization of the cruise terminal after RCL moves to a seasonal service. MPA continues to invite Norwegian Cruise Line to relocate its operation to Baltimore as it has had a rocky start with its operation at Philadelphia.

Mr. Daniels recognized Commissioner Barber on the release of her new book: *'The Grown Folks Guide to AI'*.

## **CARGO UPDATES, Dominic Scurti**

Dominic Scurti, Director of Planning, provided an overview of the Port of Baltimore (POB) and Maryland Port Administration (MPA) Cargo Statistics for 2025. It was the second-best year for POB, foreign cargo tonnage, and cargo vessel visits increased 21% over 2024. The POB ranked as the 11<sup>th</sup> largest U.S. port in foreign cargo tons and the 4<sup>th</sup> largest on the east coast. With a total of 50 million tons; 14.9 million tons in imports and 35.1 million tons in exports.

General cargo accounts for 26% of the Port of Baltimore's overall tonnage but represents 92% of the total cargo value moving through the port. Baltimore remains the second-largest U.S. port for coal exports, behind the Norfolk and Newport News terminals. The Port of Baltimore also ranks second in sugar imports, handling 445,282 tons, and second in salt imports, with 1,440,430 tons. Additional import volumes include 762,075 tons of gypsum and 353,687 tons of alumina. MPA general cargo volumes for 2025 included 176,058 tons of breakbulk/steel, 461,320 tons of forest products, 887,513 tons of Ro/Ro cargo, 867,213 tons of automobiles, and 8,701,944 tons of containerized cargo.

Cruise Maryland has remained steady, aside from the dip during the COVID-19 shutdown of cruise operations. While the loss of RCL this fall will impact on the numbers, Carnival is introducing a second ship next fall which will assist in filling in some of the gaps.

Mr. Scurti concluded with the accomplishments of MPA terminals and national rankings for 2025, with the highlights including the number one ranking for Ro/Ro, second for automobiles and record-breaking year for containers.

### **LEGISLATIVE UPDATES, Jennifer Guthrie**

Jennifer Guthrie, MPA Director of Government Relations, reported that the Maryland General Assembly session in Annapolis will adjourn on *Sine Die* set for April 13th. Ms. Guthrie thanked Port private sector partners and the Baltimore Port Alliance for their support and advocacy on behalf of the entire Port of Baltimore in Annapolis. The MPA continues to track two bills: one providing an expedited procedure for changing Heavy Weight Port Corridors and another requiring a specific number of crew on freight trains.

On the federal side, the MPA, along with other ports and the AAPA, continues to closely track the Maritime Action Plan recently released by the federal Administration.

Ms. Guthrie highlighted several upcoming events, including visits from the Congressional Budget Office on May 11 and by Members of the European Parliament Committee on Transport and Tourism on May 27. Ms. Guthrie discussed a potential partnership with the U.S. Department of State in the Port Prosperity Partnership program, formerly known as the Sister Ports Program, which would involve a sister port relationship with the Port of Mombassa, Kenya.

### **VOTE TO CLOSE MEETING**

At 9:48 a.m., in accordance with the State General Provisions Article 3-305(b)(1)(i)(ii) and (13) of the Annotated Code of Maryland, Commissioner Roberts moved that the Commission meet in Closed Session, Commissioner Barber seconded and the motion was approved unanimously. See attached Closing Statement. After a brief recess, the Commission met in Closed Session from 9:55 a.m. until 10:51 a.m. Acting Secretary Thomson, Commissioners Barber, Brewer\*, Neuman\*, Richardson, Roberts, and Webb, and Jonathan Daniels (Executive Director), Robert Munroe (Deputy Executive Director, Administration and Environment), Matthew Wypyski (Deputy Executive Director, Commercial Development), Phil Whaling (Assistant Attorney General, Deputy Principal Counsel), Tracy Pinder (Director of Audits), and Marvis Harden (Special Assistant to the Executive Director), were present for the closed session.

The following topics were discussed in the closed session:

<b>State General Provisions Article Citation #</b>	<b>Topics Discussed</b>
§ 3-305(b)(13)	Office of Legislative Audits Briefing
§ 3-305(b)(1)(i) and (ii)	Personnel Matter

Tracy Pinder, Director of Audits, presented an overview of the Legislative Audit.

Mr. Daniels presented a personnel matter for an individual over which the Commission has jurisdiction.

Commissioner Richardson made a motion to move out of the closed session, seconded by Commissioner Roberts and approved unanimously by the Commission.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Commissioner Barber made a motion to adjourn the Open Session, seconded by Commissioner Roberts. The motion carried unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 10:52 a.m.