Maryland Port Administration
Open Session Meeting Minutes, #429
Tuesday, June 9, 2026

MEETING DATE & LOCATION

The Four Hundred and Twenty-Nineth Session of the Maryland Port Commission was called to order at 9:05 a.m. on June 9, 2026, by Secretary, Kathryn Thomson. The Commission met in Open Session from 9:05 a.m. until 10:37 a.m. in the Stanton Room, 20th floor, World Trade Center, 401 E. Pratt Street, Baltimore, MD 21202.

ATTENDANCE

Chairman and Officials:
Secretary Thomson and Commissioners Barber, 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), Dominic Scurti (Director of Planning), Holly Miller (Director, Office of Navigation, Innovation & Stewardship), John Boden (Director of Human Resources), Kathleen Pickett-Bowen (Director of Security), Melody Countess (Chief Financial Officer & Treasurer), Nick Porter (Director of Business Development), Richard Scher (Director of Communications), Ryan Barry (Director of Operations), Steve Johnson (Director of Engineering), Trisha O'Neal (Director of Procurement), and William Richardson (Director of the Office of Environment, Safety, and Sustainability).

Affiliates:
Daren Dean (Manager, Maritime Management), Fitz Brutus (Office of Procurement), and Mark Riesett (Manager of Procurement for Construction and A/E).

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

Guest:
Michael Derby, Sr. Vice President and John Hess, Sr. General Manager, Northeast of Wallenius Willhelmsen.

APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

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

*Attended via Teams/phone

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE, Jonathan Daniels, Executive Director

Mr. Daniels reported on the NOAA National Weather service forecast, which predicts a below normal hurricane season for the Atlantic basin this year. The Atlantic hurricane season runs from June 1 to November 30. According to the forecast, there will be 8 to 14 named storms. Of those, 3-6 are forecasted to become hurricanes, including 1-3 major hurricanes (category 3 or higher). The average Atlantic hurricane season has 14 named storms, 7 hurricanes, 3 major hurricanes.

The interconnector bridge linking SMT and DMT has been shut down to allow work to proceed to address additional structural deficiencies discovered several weeks ago. Concrete repairs are scheduled to begin later this week, which should allow the bridge to reopen to privately owned vehicle (POV) traffic shortly thereafter before it is closed again to complete additional major repairs according to the previously established schedule. Coordination with stakeholders continues to minimize disruptions while developing a plan to reopen the bridge. Safety remains the primary consideration in decisions regarding the bridge's temporary closure and eventual reopening.

A new service will commence this summer following MSC's announcement that Baltimore has been added to its Dragon Service. This "round-the-world" service originates in China, with calls in Vietnam and Singapore before transiting to the Mediterranean. The East Coast rotation includes Boston, New York, Baltimore, Norfolk, Savannah, Freeport (Bahamas), and the Panama Canal before returning to China. The 128-day service cycle will add one additional weekly vessel call to SMT, increasing total weekly vessel calls to 16 from 12 last year. Early indications also suggest the service may have a strong intermodal component, which would complement the new double-stack capacity through the expanded Howard Street Tunnel corridor.

The potential impacts of ongoing East Coast infrastructure development on Ro/Ro cargo and automobile traffic continue to be evaluated. The Port of Jacksonville is advancing construction of additional berth capacity at its Blount Island Terminal. The $60 million investment will provide the port with three dedicated automobile berths, further strengthening its ability to accommodate growing vehicle volumes.

Additionally, the Port of Charleston recently announced an expansion of its Ro/Ro capacity at the North Charleston Terminal. Demolition of the adjacent former paper mill site, acquired with state support in 2024, is scheduled to begin this summer. The redevelopment will support future terminal expansion and enhance the port's long-term Ro/Ro capabilities.

The proposed merger between Union Pacific (UP) and Norfolk Southern (NS) continues to be monitored for potential impacts on Maryland's freight rail operations and port activity. The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) has established a working group to evaluate the potential effects of the merger on rail operations across the state. As of April 2026, the Surface Transportation Board accepted the amended merger application for review and requested additional information as part of its deliberative process.

The magnitude of the proposed merger is significant. The combined end-to-end rail network would span approximately 50,000 route miles across 43 states, with minimal route overlapping, and connect more than 100 ports. Many shippers believe a transcontinental rail network could improve efficiency and service through operational innovation.

Of concern to the POB is that the merger could reduce East Coast port calls by encouraging ocean carriers to discharge more cargo at West Coast ports and move containers inland via a land bridge. We will continue to monitor developments and evaluate any potential impacts on cargo volumes and vessel services.

On June 22, there will be a celebration at Seagirt Marine Terminal for the opening of the recently completed Howard Street Tunnel project. The improved inland route now provides the Port of Baltimore (POB) with the fastest and most efficient rail connection to the Upper Midwest.

Mr. Daniels congratulated the Port of Baltimore Environmental Education Team on recently earning Maryland Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education (MAEOE) Green Center certification. The certification recognizes organizations that promote environmental literacy, provide educational resources, and support schools through the Maryland Green Schools application process.
This achievement strengthens the Port's ability to support students, educators, and communities across Maryland through hands-on environmental education and stewardship opportunities.

PORT PARTNER PROGRAM – WALLENIUS WILHELMSEN, Michael Derby, Sr. Vice President and John Hess, Sr. General Manager, Northeast

Mr. Derby, joined by co-presenter John Hess, discussed the history and growth of Wallenius Wilhelmsen ("WW") and the significant role the company has played in the development of the Port of Baltimore. Mr. Derby outlined the company's global and U.S. footprint and fleet expansion plans, current market conditions, including ongoing impacts from Middle East disruptions on carriers' routing, bunker costs, and capacity. While only 2-3% of WW's revenues are tied to the region, the steep rise in bunker fuel costs is having a significant impact. Mr. Derby highlighted the strength of the partnership with the POB over time and the resulting operational growth and global connectivity.

Mr. Derby discussed broader industry developments, including key global trade routes and strategic points of interest in the automotive and roll-on/roll-off shipping network. WW will be adding new vessel classes and advancements within its fleet, including larger vessels that are adapted for multiple fuels, and is driving efficiency improvements in maritime logistics.

Additionally, Mr. Derby provided an overview of current market conditions, pointing to ongoing shifts in global demand, capacity balancing, and geopolitical and supply chain influences that continue to shape the vehicle shipping sector.

Mr. Hess spoke in detail about WW's importance to United States' trade, logistics and security, as WW has 3,000 employees at 40 facilities across 13 States, is the largest US vehicle exporter by ocean and is the largest US-flagged Ro/Ro operator in the Maritime Security Program, which provides sealift support to the U.S. military and federal agencies during emergencies and conflicts. Mr. Hess emphasized the strategic importance of the POB and the company's role within it. He highlighted the value of continued investment, local engagement, and long-term alignment between WW's U.S. operations and the broader Baltimore maritime ecosystem.

Finally, the presenters emphasized WW's commitment to sustainability, with its Green Corridor, new ship builds outfitted for dual fuels and efficient operations. WW is positioned at the heart of America's trade logistics network, playing a critical role in supporting supply chain efficiency, global connectivity, and broader economic and commercial security.

WORLD TRADE CENTER EXPANSION UPDATE, Bradley Smith, Director of Maritime Commercial Management & Strategic Initiatives

Mr. Smith provided an update on the World Trade Center (WTC) Expansion Project. The WTC is owned by MDOT and managed by MPA. Built in 1977, designed by world famous architect I.M. Pei. Its strategic location provides the best view in Baltimore's Inner Harbor.

As the landlord of the WTC, MPA handles day-to-day and long-term management of the entire building including all office suites and common areas.

Since 2024, MPA has been advancing a large-scale tenant expansion project that will enable three existing tenants to significantly expand their occupied space within the building.

To accommodate these expansions, MPA is implementing a combination of strategic space planning, tenant relocations, and buildouts to create the required square footage. In total, the project encompasses 124,920 rentable square feet (RSF) of work across 19 floors of the building. Upon completion, MPA anticipates 100% occupancy at the WTC, maximizing the building's leasable space while supporting the long-term growth of its existing tenant base.

CONTRACTS, Mark Riesett, Manager of Procurement for Construction and A/E

Mr. Riesett, Manager of Procurement, presented the following contracts for approval by the Maryland Port Commission.

1. **Contract # 519501 –** Storm Drain Improvements at Fairfield Marine Terminal, provide all labor and materials to perform storm drain improvements at Fairfield Marine Terminal; Amount: $6,548,000; Term: 335 workdays from Notice to Proceed.

After discussion, a motion to approve Contract #519501 was made by Commissioner Barber, seconded by Commissioner Roberts and approved unanimously by the Commission.

2. **Contract # 525018 -** Agency Wide Waterfront Structure Repairs at All Terminals, provide agency wide waterfront substructure repairs as-needed on a work-order basis at MPA facilities; NTE Amount: $10,000,000.00; Term: 1095 Workdays from Notice to Proceed (3 years).

After discussion, a motion to approve Contract #525018 was made by Commissioner Richardson, seconded by Commissioner Roberts and approved unanimously by the Commission.

3. **Contract # 525058** - Agency Wide Facilities Improvement at all terminals; Amount $10,000,000; Term: 1095 Workdays from Notice to Proceed.

After discussion, a motion to approve Contract #525058 was made by Commissioner Richardson, seconded by Commissioner Webb and approved unanimously by the Commission.

4. **Contract # 525068 A, B & C** - Miscellaneous Engineering Services, these contracts are open-ended, work-order-based contracts to provide miscellaneous engineering services for the MPA; Amount: $7,000,000 NTE - Contract A, $7,000,000 NTE, Contract B $6,000,000 NTE - Contract C; $20,000,000 NTE - Aggregate Total; Term: 07/02/2026* - 07/01/2031 (5 years) **(or earlier upon BPW approval).*

After discussion, a motion to approve Contract #525058 was made by Commissioner Roberts, seconded by Commissioner Barber and approved unanimously by the Commission.

5. **Modification No. 1 to Contract # 522827B** - Miscellaneous Engineering Services, this Modification No. 1 is to increase the dollar value of the contract by $2.5M for the design of multiple new tenant floor renovations at the World Trade Center (WTC): Amount: $7,000,000.

After discussion, a motion to approve Modification No. 1 to Contract #522827B was made by

Commissioner Webb, seconded by Commissioner Roberts and approved unanimously by the Commission.

ADJOURNMENT
There being no further business, Commissioner Barber made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Richardson. The motion was carried unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 10:37 a.m.