

Garbarino Leads Bipartisan Push to Modernize U.S. Merchant Marine Academy

From the office of Rep. Andrew R. Garbino, March 27, 2025

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congressman Andrew R. Garbarino (R-NY-02), a member of the United States Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA) Board of Visitors, today introduced bipartisan legislation to authorize more than \$1 billion over 10 years for a full-scale campus modernization of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, New York.

The bill is cosponsored by Representatives Laura Gillen (R-NY-04), Nick LaLota (R-NY-01), Tom Suozzi (D-NY-03), and Jen Kiggans (R-VA-02) underscoring a shared commitment to bolstering national security and maritime readiness through investment in one of the nation's five federal service academies.

“For generations, the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy has trained the men and women who keep our supply chains moving and our national defense strong,” said Rep. Garbarino. *“But the infrastructure on campus must keep up with the rigorous demands placed on today’s Midshipmen. This bill ensures the Academy remains a world-class institution worthy of its mission.”*

The legislation authorizes \$1.02 billion from FY2026 to FY2035 via the Maritime Security Trust Fund, beginning with \$54 million for design and planning in the first year and annual construction funding of over \$107 million thereafter. The bill calls for full operational continuity at the Academy throughout construction and recommends using design-build contracting to speed delivery and reduce costs.

“For more than 80 years, the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy has been the pride of Long Island. As one of America’s five services academies, USMMA is a pathway for young Americans to serve our country and contribute to our maritime security. I’m proud to join Rep. Garbarino and my colleagues in working together for Long Island and leading this bipartisan bill to strengthen Long Island’s tradition of producing the best Midshipmen and mariners in the world,” said Rep. Gillen.

“To ensure the Merchant Marine Academy continues to play a pivotal role in shaping the next generation of maritime and national security leaders, Congress must invest in its infrastructure, which has languished since the mid-20th century. Doing so is essential to providing Midshipmen, who will go on to serve America around the globe, with the education and hands-on training they need to excel in critical industries like marine transportation and defense,” said Rep. LaLota. *“Upgrading these facilities will strengthen the Academy’s ability to prepare top-tier officers and ensure it remains a premier institution for the nation’s future maritime leaders.”*

“The U.S. Merchant Marine Academy is a national treasure that has been neglected for decades. It is time to restore it to its former glory!” said Rep. Suozzi.

Rep. Garbarino has served on the USMMA Board of Visitors since joining Congress and has been a leading advocate for modernizing the Academy’s campus and supporting the next generation of maritime leaders.

The full text of the bill can be [found here](#).

Secretary of Defense Emphasizes Lethality, Deterrence on Guam



From Lt. Cmdr. Michelle Tucker, March 28, 2025

ANDERSEN AIR FORCE BASE, Guam – Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth arrived on Guam March 27 to meet with military and civilian leaders and speak with troops – his first visit to Guam since his January confirmation.

The visit was the second stop on Hegseth’s Pacific engagement tour, which began in Hawaii and will continue from Guam to the Philippines and Japan. Hegseth focused on strengthening alliances and bolstering warrior ethos among service members, further strengthening the United States’ deterrence posture in the region.

More than 600 service members from military commands across Guam gathered for a troop call at Andersen Air Force Base to kick off the visit. Hegseth praised them for their mission contributions, noting Guam's strategic location in the Indo-Pacific region, and charged them to increase lethality and readiness.

"What unites us is who we are and our purpose as Americans," Hegseth said. "We are in the business of warfighting. You are warfighters on behalf of our nation and we are [going to] make sure you have a military built and prepared for that fight ... American leadership ensures the free world is protected – to advance American interests and the interests of our allies."

The visit fell one day after the 80th anniversary of end of the Battle of Iwo Jima that occurred just 750 miles north northwest of Guam. During the troop call, Hegseth recognized a group of seven Iwo Jima veterans who traveled to Guam to attend commemoration events. He thanked them for their courage and fortitude, and for paving the way for Americans in the Pacific.

Commander, Joint Region Marianas Navy Rear Adm. Brent DeVore greeted Hegseth upon arrival along with other senior military leaders on island.

"The Secretary's visit underscored the Department of Defense's commitment to the security of Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, as well as the entire Micronesia region's strategic importance to the Pacific," DeVore said. "We highlighted our efforts and contributions to strategic deterrence, demonstrating U.S. strength and daily preparedness – and tangible examples of ongoing work in cyber security, missile defense, our construction projects throughout Guam, CNMI, and the COFA states, and infrastructure resilience."

"We all emphasized the interconnectedness between the

Department of Defense efforts and our local communities, in all we do,” he added.

During a military roundtable, Hegseth received briefs from installation commanders and key leaders throughout the region detailing capabilities and future growth on Guam. Commander, 36th Wing, Andersen Air Force Base Air Force Brig. Gen. Thomas Palenske stressed to Hegseth the importance of the work the team is doing on Guam.

“Andersen Air Force Base is incredibly vital to the mission in the Indo-Pacific,” Palenske said. “Our strategic location and the exceptional readiness of our personnel reinforce our commitment to deterrence and combat readiness in the region. The capabilities showcased and discussed during this visit not only empower our forces but also strengthen our alliances and ensure we stand ready to respond to any challenge.”

The “Island Knights” of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 25 flew Hegseth in an MH-60S Sea Hawk helicopter for an aerial tour of the island. During the tour, Naval Facilities Engineering Command Marianas Commanding Officer Navy Capt. Troy Brown briefed Hegseth on current and future construction and resiliency improvements on Guam including the Glass Breakwater, which was damaged during Typhoon Mawar. The breakwater is critical to harbor protection and the supply chain for the entire island.

Finally, Guam Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Gov. Arnold Palacios, and Guam Rep. James Moylan met with Hegseth to discuss military-civilian partnership from a local perspective.

“Our goal is achieve peace through strength,” Hegseth said. “By putting America first, that means working with partners and allies throughout the region, reestablishing deterrence and building capabilities right here. These islands are the

tip of America's spear in the Pacific.

"I want to be very clear to everyone in this room," Hegseth continued. "... Any attack against these islands is an attack against the U.S. We recognize that, we understand that, and we are committed to that."

USS Normandy and GDFS Shahoud Conduct Maritime Exercise



The Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Normandy (CG 60) conducts a passing exercise with Guyana Defense Force Defiant-class patrol ship GDFS Shahoud in the Caribbean Sea, March 27, 2025. (U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Dylan M. Kinee)

By U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/ U.S. Fourth Fleet
Public Affairs

March 28, 2025

CARIBBEAN SEA – Deployed to strengthen maritime partnerships in the Caribbean, the U.S. Navy Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Normandy (CG 60) conducted a passing exercise (PASSEX) with the Guyana Defence Force Defiant-class patrol vessel GDFS Shahoud (1039) on Mar. 27.

A PASSEX is an exercise conducted between two or more navies to ensure best practices for communication and cooperation and normally includes both communications and maneuvering drills. These exercises are designed to increase interoperability and enhance capabilities.

The two ships conducted formation-maneuvering events supported by Normandy's embarked MH-60R Seahawk helicopter from Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron 50; the aircrew conducted a photo exercise as the final event of the maneuvers.

"Our Normandy Sailors appreciate the opportunity to sail and operate alongside our partners from Guyana," said CAPT Nathan Diaz, USS Normandy Commanding Officer. "Maritime exercises such as these improve our seafaring skills and build our combined readiness for future engagements."

"Shared maritime presence in our region—operating at sea with our allies and partners—is essential," said Rear Adm. Carlos Sardiello, commander of U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet. "Through operations and exercises like this one with Guyana we strengthen both U.S. and regional security and improve our military-to-military cooperation."

USS Normandy is deployed to the U.S. Southern Command Area of Responsibility to protect U.S. interests in the region and strengthen maritime partnerships through bilateral, trilateral, and multinational maritime operations and Theater Security Cooperation (TSC) activities.

U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet serves as a

trusted maritime partner for Caribbean, Central and South American maritime forces and promotes unity, security, and stability in the region.

Japan, Philippines, and United States Conduct Multilateral Maritime Cooperative Activity



The U.S. Navy Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Shoup (DDG 85), the Philippine Navy Jose Rizal-class guided-missile frigate BRP Jose Rizal (FF 150), and the Japan Maritime Self Defense Force Mogami-class frigate JS Noshiro (FFM 3) conduct a multilateral Maritime Cooperative Activity

(MCA) within the Philippines' Exclusive Economic Zone, March 28, 2025.

By U.S. Indo-Pacific Command Public Affairs, March 28, 2025

SOUTH CHINA SEA – The Armed Forces of the Philippines, the Japan Maritime Self Defense Force and the United States Navy, demonstrating a collective commitment to strengthen regional and international cooperation in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific, conducted a multilateral Maritime Cooperative Activity (MCA) within the Philippines' Exclusive Economic Zone, March 28, 2025.

This iteration builds upon previous MCAs and our continuing operations together, which strengthens the interoperability of our defense/armed forces doctrines, tactics, techniques, and procedures.

MCAs are conducted in a manner that is consistent with international law and with due regard to the safety and navigational rights and freedoms of all nations. Participating units included the U.S. Navy Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Shoup (DDG 85) and a P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol and reconnaissance aircraft, the Philippine Navy Jose Rizal-class guided-missile frigate BRP Jose Rizal (FF 150) and King Air C-90 aircraft, and the Japan Maritime Self Defense Force Mogami-class frigate JS NOSHIRO (FFM 3).

The U.S., along with our allies and partners, upholds the right to freedom of navigation and overflight and other internationally lawful uses of the sea related to those freedoms.

CMS Launches Publication on Renewing the U.S. Commercial Maritime Industry



Dr. Steven Wills, left, John D. McCown, Brent Sadler and William McDonald at the Center for Maritime Strategy book launch event. *Photo credit: James Peterson*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Center for Maritime Strategy (CMS) held the Washington-area launch of its first major publication, “Returning from Ebb Tide: Renewing the United States Commercial Maritime Industry,” on March 26 at the Arlington headquarters of the Navy League of the United States.

The book is a thorough analysis of the problems facing merchant mariners and contains recommendations to strengthen American commercial shipping.

Speakers at the event included three of the book’s 10 contributing authors: Brent Sadler, senior research fellow,

Naval Warfare and Advanced Technology, at the Heritage Foundation's Allison Center for National Security, and the new nominee to head the U.S. Maritime Administration; John D. McCown, non-resident senior fellow at CMS; and William McDonald, former director of the Office of Sealift Support at MARAD.

Admiral James Foggo, U.S. Navy (retired), said the book was an early focus of CMS and is needed because of how China is dominating commercial shipping, with 50% of the commercial fleet to America's 1%.

The decline of the U.S. commercial fleet has several causes, he said, including the Peace Dividend after World War II, the end of industry subsidies under President Reagan and globalization that led to outsourcing.



The book will also have a launch event at Sea-Air-Space 2025.
Photo credit: James Peterson

"Now, the fleet is a shadow of its former self," he said. "...We can ill afford to idly sit by and observe the status quo."

Sea-Air-Space Launch

CMS will also hold a book launch and discussion at Sea-Air-Space 2025, on Tuesday, April 8 from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Editor Dr. Steve Wills will lead a discussion with the authors on how our nation's commercial maritime capability declined over the past several decades and how to resurrect the United States' critically important maritime sector.

Confirmed speakers for the Sea-Air-Space event include Sadler and MCown as well as Vice Admiral Dee Mewbourne, U.S. Navy (ret.), CEO at Quadrant Nuclear Industries, and Dr. Brad Martin, senior policy researcher at RAND Corporation.

U.S. Trains First Australian Radiological Control Technicians to Support AUKUS Submarine Force



In a milestone for the AUKUS (Australia, United Kingdom, United States) enhanced trilateral security partnership, four Australian civilian maintenance technicians, pictured with Norfolk Naval Shipyard commander Capt. James Mosman, graduated from the U.S. Navy's Radiological Controls Technician Qualifying School (RCTQS) at the Norfolk Naval Shipyard March 26, 2025.

By Norfolk Naval Shipyard, Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard & Intermediate Maintenance Facility, and AUKUS Integration and Acquisition Public Affairs, March 27, 2025

PORTSMOUTH, Va. – In a milestone for the AUKUS (Australia, United Kingdom, United States) enhanced trilateral security partnership, four Australian civilian maintenance technicians from the Australian government's submarine company, ASC, graduated from the U.S. Navy's Radiological Controls Technician Qualifying School (RCTQS) at the Norfolk Naval Shipyard March 26, 2025. The group's successful completion of this specialized training marks a key step in supporting Australia's acquisition of sovereign conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines under AUKUS Pillar I Optimal

Pathway.

The RCTQS provides the specialized training required to uphold the U.S. Navy's nuclear and radiological safety standards and ensure compliance with U.S. regulatory requirements. The rigorous six-month program provides detailed theoretical and practical-skills training with participants demonstrating their knowledge and abilities through comprehensive assessments and examinations. Upon qualification, these technicians are responsible for ensuring adherence to U.S. radiological controls requirements and standards during the operation and maintenance of naval nuclear propulsion plants at nuclear shipyards and maintenance activities. Since its inception, RCTQS has been instrumental in developing personnel with the knowledge and skills necessary to protect Sailors, workers, the public and the environment.

"This is an intense, demanding school that teaches complex theory and application of radiological controls," said RCTQS instructor Donald Sweeney. "The Australian students were well prepared, focused, and committed from day one. They continue to exceed expectations at every step and are well positioned to perform their roles on conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines in their home country. I look forward to hearing about their future success."

The ASC technicians started their training in the fall of 2024 after spending three months training at the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard and Intermediate Maintenance Facility (PHNSY & IMF) in Hawaii. Over the next three years, approximately ten ASC technicians will enter the RCTQS program.

"Having the Australian maintenance personnel training and working side-by-side with our American trainees builds Australia's technical expertise and readiness to keep the U.S. submarines assigned to Submarine Rotational Force – West ready to operate," said Meganne Atkins, acting director of the AUKUS Integration and Acquisition Office.

Norfolk Naval Shipyard (NNSY) Commander Capt. James "Jip" Mosman emphasized the benefits of the collaboration: "Incorporating the Australian technicians into our training facility has been a great opportunity to build a positive and productive partnership. The intensive training they received lays the groundwork for them to effectively lead and execute radiological operations."

Participating in the training has been an invaluable experience for the Australian cohort.

"The skills and knowledge we have gained as well as the professional relationships we have forged are essential for us to safely and securely steward Australia's conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines," said ASC trainee Steve*. "We are more confident than ever in our ability to meet Australia's regulation requirements and to uphold the responsibility imposed upon us in our duties to maintain the integrity and viability of the program."

More than 130 Australian civilian submarine maintainers are currently training at PHNSY & IMF to maintain nuclear-powered fast-attack submarines. "As the lead maintenance activity for Submarine Rotational Force – West, we are charged with ensuring the Australian personnel are ready to conduct maintenance on U.S. submarines," said Capt. Ryan McCrillis, PHNSY & IMF's commander. "Being able to send RCTQS trainees to Norfolk, Virginia, where the Navy has established this centralized high-quality training facility, ensures that when our submarines start rotating to Western Australia, the right people with the right training are ready to keep them fit to fight."

The AUKUS trilateral security partnership strengthens the participating nations' lethality and warfighting capabilities, enhances readiness by adding capacity and resilience to the submarine industrial base and is essential to securing a free and open Indo-Pacific region through operating more

interoperable high-end allied warships to deter aggression.

The AUKUS I&A Program Office is the U.S. Navy office responsible for executing the trilateral partnership to assist Australia in acquiring conventionally armed, nuclear-powered attack submarines at the earliest possible date while setting the highest nuclear stewardship standards and continuing to maintain the highest nonproliferation standard.

Norfolk Naval Shipyard, one of the nation's four public shipyards, focuses on generating fleet readiness and putting more combat-ready platforms at sea. As part of a broader effort to standardize radiological training across the service, the U.S. Navy established the RCTQS at the shipyard in 1996. Developed with input from multiple naval shipyards, the program has continuously evolved to incorporate the latest safety protocols and technological advancements. To date, RCTQS has trained nearly 7,000 radiological control technicians, playing a vital role in supporting the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program.

Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard & Intermediate Maintenance Facility is a field activity of Naval Sea Systems Command and a one-stop regional maintenance center for the U.S. Navy's surface ships and submarines. It is the largest industrial employer in the state of Hawaii, with a combined civilian and military workforce of approximately 6,400. It is the most comprehensive fleet repair and maintenance facility between the U.S. West Coast and the Far East, strategically located in the heart of the Pacific, being about a week's steaming time closer to potential regional contingencies in the Indo-Pacific.

*Per ASC protocols, employee last names are not publicly released

U.S. Coast Guard cutter promotes regional security in the Pacific with Papua New Guinea



East New Britain Province Governor Michael Marum and members from the East New Britian Province government, Papua New Guinea pose with crew from the Coast Guard Cutter Midgett (WMSL 757) on the flight deck in Rabaul, Papua New Guinea March 17, 2025. (U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Jennifer Nilson)

From U.S. Coast Guard 14th District, March 26, 2025

RABAUL, Papua New Guinea – The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Midgett (WMSL 757) recently concluded its second port call in Papua New Guinea (PNG), following nine days of shiprider operations with representatives from the PNG Defence Force, PNG Customs Service, and PNG National Fisheries Authority.

Midgett was invited by the Papua New Guinea government to participate in the operation. The PNG shipriders led the mission by selecting vessels of interests and conducting boardings while the U.S. Coast Guard provided ship based and shoreside support. The successful shiprider operations reinforced the importance of deepening and expanding strong bilateral relationships.

During the nine-day operation, Midgett facilitated six at-sea inspections within the PNG Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) under the PNG-U.S. bilateral agreement. The U.S Coast Guard and PNG's bilateral maritime law enforcement agreements enhance PNG sovereignty with the capacity to enforce PNG's maritime laws through shared information exchanges and joint patrols that deter illegal activities and malign behavior in PNG's EEZ.

While in Rabaul, Midgett hosted a key leadership engagement with the East New Britain Governor, Michael Marum, and PNG fisheries stakeholders. During the engagement, members of Midgett and PNG representatives participated in roundtable discussions focused on PNG-U.S. bilateral agreements and security within the PNG EEZ and received a tour of the cutter.

Midgett crewmembers visited a local school to participate in sports and seamanship activities. Midgett also hosted students on board, allowing students to learn about shipboard life and participated in firefighting training.

Commissioned in 2019 and homeported in Honolulu, Midgett is the eighth Legend-class National Security Cutter. At 418-feet,

these cutters are the largest and most capable in the U.S. Coast Guard fleet. Equipped with advanced technology, they are ideally suited to support a wide range of missions, including maritime security, law enforcement, and search and rescue operations.

US Navy to Christen Future USNS Billy Frank Jr.



From the U.S. Navy Office of Information, March 27, 2025

MOBILE, Ala.—The U.S. Navy will christen the future USNS Billy Frank Jr. (T-ATS 11) during a ceremony on Saturday, March 29, at 10:00 a.m. CDT at Austal USA in Mobile, Alabama.

The Honorable William Frank III, former chairman of the Nisqually Tribe and son of the ship's namesake will deliver the principal address followed by remarks from Dr. Brett Seidle, acting assistant secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, and Acquisition; Rear Adm. Thomas Anderson, program executive officer, Program Executive Office, Ships;

Rear Adm. Mark Haigis, deputy commander, Military Sealift Command; and Michelle Kruger, president of Austal USA.

In a time-honored Navy tradition, Ship Sponsor Peggen Frank will christen the ship by breaking a bottle of sparkling wine across the bow. Frank is the executive director of Salmon Defense and daughter-in-law of the ship's namesake.

The ship is named in honor of Korean War veteran and Nisqually tribal member Billy Frank Jr., who received an Albert Schweitzer Prize for humanitarianism; a Martin Luther King Jr. Distinguished Service Award; and, posthumously, a Presidential Medal of Freedom for his over 30-years of service to the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission.

The Navajo-class ship is a multi-mission, common hull platform that will deploy to support a range of missions such as towing, rescue, salvage, humanitarian assistance, oil spill response, and wide-area search and surveillance. Navajo-class ships will be capable of towing U.S. Navy ships and will have 6,000 square feet of deck space for embarked systems.

Heritage Congratulates Brent Sadler on Maritime Administrator Nomination



From the Heritage Foundation, March 27, 2025

WASHINGTON – The Heritage Foundation released the following statement in response to President Donald Trump’s nomination of Brent Sadler (Captain, U.S. Navy, Retired) as the next Maritime Administrator in the Department of Transportation’s Maritime Administration (MARAD). MARAD supports America’s maritime transportation infrastructure – including ships and shipping, port and vessel operations, national security, environment, and safety.

Brent joined Heritage after a 26-year Navy career that included numerous operational tours on nuclear-powered submarines, staffing of senior Defense Department leaders, and as a military diplomat in Asia. As a Senior Research Fellow, Brent has focused on maritime security and the technologies shaping our future maritime forces.

Heritage Vice President of the Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis Institute for National Security and Foreign Policy [Victoria Coates](#) commented:

“We are deeply proud to see Brent Sadler nominated for this critical position related to America’s national and economic security. His comprehensive and successful Naval career as well as his policy work at Heritage position him well to serve this role with excellence and integrity. We will miss him, but he is the best candidate for this role.”

Heritage Director of the Allison Center for National Security [Robert Greenway](#) added:

“Having worked alongside Brent for several years, I’ve seen firsthand his leadership, passion, and knowledge related to the maritime domain and the revolution in shipping required to transform a vital industry. His nomination is a testament to the Trump administration’s unwavering commitment to addressing America’s depleted maritime sector amid global uncertainty.”

Bollinger Shipyards Gets Coast Guard Contract Modification for Polar Security Cutter Program



Since acquiring the facilities in 2022, Bollinger has nearly tripled its Mississippi production workforce

From Bollinger Shipyards, March 25, 2025

PASCAGOULA, Miss. – Tuesday, March 25, 2025 – Bollinger Shipyards announced today it has received a \$951.6 million Fixed-Price-Incentive-Firm Target (FPIF) contract modification from the United States Coast Guard, advancing the Detail Design and Construction phase of the Polar Security Cutter (PSC) Program. This milestone underscores Bollinger’s integral role in strengthening America’s maritime presence and operational capabilities in the Arctic.

“Securing this contract modification has truly been a herculean effort and underscores the incredible trust the U.S. Government has placed in Bollinger to build and deliver the first heavy polar icebreaker in half a century,” said Ben Bordelon, President and CEO of Bollinger Shipyards. “We wouldn’t be in the solid position we’re in today without the leadership and the tireless efforts of the entire team at

Bollinger Mississippi Shipbuilding. Their hard work and dedication have successfully put the PSC program on a strong path forward after a rocky start under the previous, foreign-owned builder. We now look forward to receiving the green light to begin full production.”

Bordelon also expressed gratitude for the role of national and state leadership in moving this program forward.

“I am also grateful for the leadership of President Trump and his Administration in recognizing the urgent need for American-made icebreakers. Because of his foresight and commitment to rebuilding America’s shipbuilding capabilities, this historic project is now moving forward.”

Bordelon also acknowledged Mississippi’s leadership for championing the PSC Program and state as a dominant force in shipbuilding.

“I also want to thank Governor Reeves and Mississippi’s Congressional Delegation for their leadership and support, especially as we leverage ongoing state and local investments to ensure Bollinger Mississippi remains the premier example of American shipbuilding.”

“As the Arctic grows as an arena of great power competition, the United States will require far more icebreaking capability from the U.S. Coast Guard to defend our interests in the region. Today’s award is a testament to the good work that Bollinger continues to do on the Polar Security Cutter program and the growing urgency with which their platforms are needed to boost our national defense,” said U.S. Sen. Roger Wicker (R-MS), Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee. “The Mississippi Gulf Coast will not only benefit from even more national security-focused quality jobs and economic development, but it will also continue to be a national player and powerhouse in mission-critical innovation and military capability.”

“Mississippi continues to prove its status as the premier destination for American shipbuilding—driving both national defense and commercial maritime strength,” said U.S. Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-MS). “This milestone not only reinforces the Gulf Coast’s strategic importance, but it also reflects the value of returning critical shipbuilding programs to experienced, American-owned hands. Under Bollinger Shipyards’ strong leadership and investment, a once-stalled program will move forward with renewed urgency. I fully support this effort, which brings more high-quality jobs to Mississippi and ensures the Coast Guard is able to meet the growing challenges in the Arctic and beyond.”

Bollinger’s continued investment and growth on the Mississippi Gulf Coast reflect the skills, strength and talent of Mississippi’s workforce,” said Mississippi Governor Tate Reeves. “This announcement reinforces Mississippi’s pivotal role in American shipbuilding and solidifies Mississippi’s reputation as a national leader in maritime innovation and excellence.”

“Bollinger Mississippi Shipyards has a strong track record in American shipbuilding, and their role in the Polar Security Cutter program is another important step. This historic milestone strengthens national security, supports the domestic shipbuilding workforce, and enhances our Arctic presence. Ensuring the U.S. Coast Guard has the tools it needs is critical, and I look forward to seeing this project move forward,” said U.S. Rep. Mike Ezell (R-MS-04).

As Bollinger continues to enhance its operations in Mississippi into world-class shipyards, the company remains committed to making strategic investments to modernize and expand its capabilities. Additionally, the contract modification ensures Bollinger continues to provide its workforce with industry-leading wages throughout the life of the PSC program. Since acquiring foreign-owned VT Halter in November 2022, Bollinger has made a significant economic

impact in the state through targeted investments and workforce expansion. To date, Bollinger has invested \$76 million across its Mississippi facilities, including Bollinger Mississippi Shipbuilding (BMS), Bollinger Mississippi Repair (BMR), Bollinger Gulfport Shipyard (BGS), and CHAND Gulf Coast.

Since the acquisition in 2022, Bollinger has increased its Mississippi workforce by over 61%, with production roles at BMS alone increasing by more than 178%. These numbers are expected to rise as the program reaches full production over the coming years. A key driver of this growth has been Bollinger's innovative Bootcamp workforce development programs, which continue to strengthen the skilled labor pipeline.

"Our investment in developing the next generation of skilled American workers not only strengthens our competitive edge in the shipbuilding industry but also underscores our commitment to fostering economic growth and American innovation," added Bordelon. "We are committed to providing high-quality careers that positively impact the families and communities we support along Mississippi's Gulf coast."

This contract modification primarily supports operations at Bollinger Mississippi Shipbuilding, with additional project contributions from facilities located in Massachusetts, Illinois, Virginia, Georgia, Louisiana, and other regions. Completion of the first Polar Security Cutter is anticipated by May 2030.

The Polar Security Cutter will provide the United States with enhanced operational capability in polar regions, playing a critical role in safeguarding national security, economic stability, and supporting vital maritime and commercial interests.