MARAD Launches New Marine Highway Module of Port Planning, Investment Toolkit



A cargo ship unloads at the Port of New Orleans. Gnovick / Wikipedia

WASHINGTON—The U.S. Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration (MARAD) announced in an Oct. 8 release the launch of a new Marine Highway module of the Port Planning & Investment Toolkit (Toolkit), which helps U.S. ports plan, evaluate, and finance freight transportation projects.

This easy-to-read, easy-to-understand, and easy-to-execute Toolkit, which was produced as part of a cooperative agreement between MARAD and the American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA), helps guide ports toward fruitful investments.

"This Toolkit will help the development of future port projects and improve the nation's long-term efficiency and economic competitiveness," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao

The goal of the Port Planning & Investment Toolkit is to provide U.S. ports with a common framework and examples of best practices. The analytical tools and guidance contained in this comprehensive resource are designed to aid ports in developing "investment-grade" project plans and obtaining capital for their projects in a variety of ways, including: (1) assisting metropolitan and regional planning organizations and state agencies in qualifying for formula funding or aid; (2) better positioning marine highway projects for federal aid; and (3) assisting ports in obtaining private sector investments.

"By working together, we are helping to support investments in

our ports that will pay dividends for years to come," said Maritime Administrator Mark H. Buzby. "I am pleased that the new module of the Toolkit focuses on investments in America's Marine Highways, which can help reduce traffic congestion and related pollution by moving cargoes off our crowded highways and onto to our Nation's navigable waterways."

The marine highway module of the Port Planning & Investment Toolkit provides an overview of America's Marine Highway Program and educates readers on how marine highway services can become designated projects by USDOT. It explains how to plan a new marine highway service, determine its feasibility, and identify possible funding mechanisms. This module of the Port Planning & Investment Toolkit will be updated periodically as new regulations and policies affecting marine highway planning, feasibility, and investment requirements related to the applicable laws discussed in the document are developed.