U.S. Marine Economy Continues Upward Trend

$476 billion contribution helps build a 'greater, more Climate-Ready Nation'

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The American marine economy continued to bolster the nation in 2022 as demonstrated by increased sales and jobs, according to the most recent statistics from the annual Marine Economy Satellite Account (MESA) released by two Department of Commerce agencies – NOAA and the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA).

The marine economy contributed a total of $476 billion in economic impact in 2022, making up nearly 2% of the nation's gross domestic product (GDP). It generated $777 billion in sales, and supported 2.4 million jobs in 2022. MESA provides valuable insights on how the marine sector contributes to the nation's economy.

"A strong, sustainable marine economy helps build a greater, more Climate-Ready Nation," U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo said. "The Biden-Harris Administration and the Department of Commerce are committed to enhancing the marine economy, and helping communities and ecosystems grow and thrive."

"These figures show how essential the Blue Economy is to American prosperity," said NOAA Administrator Rick Spinrad, Ph.D. "The ocean and the Great Lakes are integral to the overall health of America's economy, and they impact our lives in numerous ways."

The largest contributors to GDP are tourism and recreation, with $163 billion; national defense and public administration,

with $149 billion; and offshore minerals, with $62 billion.

The sales sectors that showed the most growth for 2022 include:
• Ship and boat building, up 14.6%;
• Coastal tourism and recreation, up 8.1%; and
• Marine transportation and warehousing, up 7%.

For the first time, MESA includes information on wind energy and alternative power generation, allowing for a greater understanding of the offshore wind industry's importance to the nation's economy. Wind farm construction totaled $161 million in sales, and alternative power generation totaled $10 million in sales.

MESA is in its seventh year, as NOAA and the BEA produce statistics that improve national estimates for ocean, coastal and major water bodies' economic activity by major industry, accounting for inflation. The data comprises 10 sectors that represent businesses dependent on America's ocean, coasts and the Great Lakes.

"This report underscores the critical need to do whatever we can to support and bolster the marine sector," said NOAA's National Ocean Service Assistant Administrator, Nicole LeBoeuf. "Our nation's marine economy influences many aspects of our economic landscape and our daily lives, affecting regions far beyond our coasts."

These data reflect a period from 2017 to 2022 and is the most comprehensive and accurate produced to date. The marine economic statistics validate previous estimates of the marine economy's value.

The 10 sectors, ranked by sales, adjusted for inflation, and percentage change compared to the previous year:
• Tourism and recreation, $220 billion, up 8.1%.
• National defense and public administration, $194 billion, down 2.5%.

- Offshore minerals, $66 billion, down 1.3%.
- Transportation and warehousing, $56 billion, up 7%.
- Living resources, $31 billion, down 6.7%.
- Ship and boat building, $20 billion, up 14.6%.
- Coastal utilities, $15 billion, down 3.2%.
- Research and education, $12 billion, up 4%.
- Professional and technical services, $8 billion, down 5.5%.
- Marine construction, $7 billion, up 3.1%.

“We can continue building a thriving marine economy for America by investing in restoration, sustainability and working closely with stakeholders,” said NOAA Chief Economist Monica Grasso, Ph.D. “A thriving, resilient marine economy uplifts our communities and drives our nation forward.”

The report, data and other information are available at NOAA’s Digital Coast website and on the BEA Marine Economy website. MESA’s statistics reflect 2022 data, given data availability and the analysis process.