



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Maritime Administration

[Docket Number MARAD-2026-0496]

Request for Information: Icebreaker Collaboration Effort (ICE) Pact

AGENCY: Maritime Administration (MARAD), U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Notice and request for information.

SUMMARY: This notice requests information from the public to assist MARAD in determining which shipyards in the U.S. have the capacity to construct ships capable of operating in ice conditions and to identify what factors would be necessary to further develop and construct icebreaker ships in the U.S. Information gathered in response to the request could be used to increase the capacity of the U.S. to design, produce, and maintain polar icebreakers through trilateral collaboration with Canada and Finland, while supporting each country's shipbuilding industrial base.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before [*INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER*].

ADDRESSES: To ensure that you do not duplicate your docket submissions, please submit all comments by only one of the following ways:

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* Go to <https://www.regulations.gov>, search the docket number listed above and follow the online instructions for submitting comments.
- *Mail:* Docket Management Facility, U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue S.E., W12-140, Washington, D.C. 20590-0001.
- *Hand Delivery:* Suite W12-140 of the Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20590 between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

E.T., Monday through Friday, except Federal Holidays. The telephone number is 202-366-9329.

Instructions: You must include the agency name and the docket number at the beginning of your comments. All comments received will be posted without change to <https://www.regulations.gov>, including any personal information provided.

Note: Input submitted online via www.regulations.gov is not immediately posted to the site. It may take several business days before your submission is posted.

Privacy Act: Anyone can search the electronic form of all comments received into any of our dockets by the name of the individual submitting the comment (or signing the comment, if submitted on behalf of an association, business, labor union, etc.). For information on DOT's compliance with the Privacy Act, please visit <https://www.transportation.gov/privacy>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. David Heller, Deputy Associate Administrator for Shipbuilding and Industry Expansion, 202-366-1850, or via email at david.heller@dot.gov. Office hours for MARAD are from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., E.T., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On November 19, 2025, representatives of the United States, Canada, and Finland signed a Joint Statement of Intent (JSOI) outlining their intentions for advancing the Icebreaker Collaboration Effort, or ICE Pact. This trilateral framework aims to enhance collaboration on the production of polar ice breakers and related capabilities, while fostering stronger security and economic ties among the three nations. The initiative focuses on bolstering the signatory nations' shipbuilding industries and industrial capacity, through information exchange and workforce development in the context of polar icebreaker construction and other polar capabilities.

ICE Pact comprises four key components: enhanced information sharing and technical exchange between the three countries, collaboration on workforce development,

an invitation for allies and partners to purchase icebreakers built in U.S., Canadian, or Finnish shipyards, and collaborating on research and development. Recognizing the capital-intensive nature of shipbuilding, the framework emphasizes the importance of long-term, multi-ship orderbooks to ensure the viability of shipyards. By leveraging their shipbuilding capacities, the United States, Canada, and Finland aim to not only meet their own needs but also support partner nations in accessing polar regions at an affordable cost.

The framework also supports directly the fielding of needed polar capabilities. This is particularly important to the U.S. Coast Guard's Polar Security Cutter (PSC) and Arctic Security Cutter (ASC) programs, through which the U.S. Coast Guard seeks to build new heavy and medium icebreakers. On October 8, 2025, President Trump issued a memorandum titled "Construction of Arctic Security Cutters," wherein he determined the current fleet of American icebreakers to be insufficient to meet operational demands. President Trump directed the leveraging of ICE Pact to inform a plan that would build a select number of ASCs abroad, in a phased manner that promotes the on-shoring of expertise necessary to build follow-on icebreakers domestically. These vessels will serve as vital national assets, ensuring access to polar regions and fulfilling crucial missions such as defense readiness, all while operating alongside the icebreakers of allied nations in the extreme environmental conditions of the high latitudes.

To focus workforce development initiatives, the Department of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Departments of Transportation and Labor, developed and released in November 2025 the Icebreaker Collaboration Effort U.S. National Workforce Development Plan. This plan serves as a framework for coordinating U.S. government efforts in supporting the development of the skilled trades and occupations across various sectors, including the domestic maritime industrial base, necessary to build icebreakers domestically.

Request for Information (RFI)

MARAD requests relevant comments and information from U.S. shipyards involved in the design, manufacture, export, and research and development of polar icebreaker and related capabilities.

The following information is requested; please provide as much detail as possible:

- 1) What economic opportunities or risks may accrue to communities from increased U.S. polar shipbuilding activity (jobs, infrastructure demands, or other potential impacts)?
- 2) What regional infrastructure investments (ports, utilities, transportation networks, technology, or other investments) are required to support expanded icebreaker production?
- 3) What barriers prevent small or mid-sized suppliers from participating in the polar shipbuilding supply chain?
- 4) What incentives or technical assistance would help small businesses join or scale in the shipbuilding supply chain?
- 5) What information-sharing mechanisms would help suppliers better anticipate demand, align production, or mitigate risk?
- 6) Are there critical materials or components that should be produced or stockpiled domestically?
- 7) How can local schools, technical colleges, and apprenticeship programs be better integrated into ICE Pact workforce development? What existing educational or training programs could contribute to ICE Pact workforce development?
- 8) What new curricula or certifications would help prepare workers for polar vessel design and construction, and how are trade unions involved in the development of the workforce or in recruiting and retaining workers?

- 9) What community-level factors (housing availability, childcare, transportation, cost of living, or other factors) influence the ability to recruit and retain workers in shipbuilding regions?
- 10) What innovations and advanced technologies (AI-enabled design tools, robotics, digital twins, cold-weather materials, alternative fuel systems, or other advanced technologies) should be prioritized for collaboration under ICE Pact?
- 11) What specific testing facilities does the U.S. need to be successful (materials labs, climate chambers, autonomous systems ranges, or other facilities)? Do these facilities currently exist in the U.S.?
- 12) What concerns do stakeholders have regarding intellectual property protection in multinational shipbuilding programs, and are there safeguards that should be implemented to protect these designs?
- 13) What national security requirements, including export controls, may pose problems for exports of U.S.-built icebreakers or construction in partner or ally shipyards?
- 14) What factors should guide decisions about exporting U.S.-built icebreakers to partners or allies?
- 15) What contract structures (block buys, multiyear procurement, public-private partnerships, or other structures) would help stabilize orderbooks?
- 16) What financial or policy tools (loan guarantees, grants, risk-sharing mechanisms, or other policy tools) would help shipyards modernize or expand?
- 17) What lessons from past U.S. or allied shipbuilding initiatives should be applied to ICE Pact to avoid cost overruns, delays, or capacity mismatches?
- 18) What models of multinational industrial cooperation (AUKUS, NATO, or other models) should be copied or avoided?
- 19) What basic research needs exist that would benefit icebreaker operations in the polar regions?

20) What factors should guide the development of U.S. planning for future icebreaker maintenance requirements and underlying supply chain needs?

21) In what statutorily established ways can MARAD best support the development of the skilled trades and occupations across the maritime industrial base to build icebreakers domestically?

Electronic Access

A copy of this Notice, all comments received on this Notice, and all background material may be viewed online at <https://www.regulations.gov> using the docket number listed above. Electronic retrieval help and guidelines are also available at <https://www.regulations.gov>. An electronic copy of this document also may be downloaded from the Office of the Federal Register's Website at: www.FederalRegister.gov and the Government Publishing Office's database at: www.GovInfo.gov.

Confidential Business Information

Confidential Business Information (CBI) is commercial or financial information that is both customarily and actually treated as private by its owner. Under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. 552), CBI is exempt from public disclosure. If your comments responsive to this RFI contain commercial or financial information that is customarily treated as private, that you actually treat as private, and that is relevant or responsive to this RFI, it is important that you clearly designate the submitted comments as CBI. You may ask DOT to give confidential treatment to information you give to the Department by taking the following steps: (1) Mark each page of the original document submission containing CBI as "Confidential"; (2) send DOT, along with the original document, a second copy of the original document with the CBI deleted; and (3) explain why the information you are submitting is CBI. Unless you are notified otherwise, DOT will treat such marked submissions as confidential under the FOIA, and they will not be

placed in the public docket of this RFI. Submissions containing CBI should be sent to Mr. David Heller, Associate Administrator for Business and Finance Development, Room W21-318, MARAD, 1200 New Jersey Avenue S.E., Washington, D.C. 20590.

Any comment submissions that DOT receives that are not specifically designated as CBI will be placed in the public docket.

(Authority: 46 U.S.C. Chapter 537; 49 CFR 1.93(a), 46 CFR Part 298)

By order of the Maritime Administrator.

T. Mitchell Hudson, Jr.,
Secretary, Maritime Administration.

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