



U.S. Department of
Transportation

News:

Office of Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

Contact: Mari Maseng
Tel.: (202) 426-4570

REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION
ELIZABETH HANFORD DOLE
WHITE HOUSE SIGNING CEREMONY
OCEAN SHIPPING ACT OF 1984
MARCH 20, 1984

Today we set a new course for America's maritime industry. To mark that event the President will shortly sign into law the Shipping Act of 1984. This law is a tribute to the U.S.-flag carriers, shippers, freight forwarders, ports, maritime labor organizations and Congressional committees that have worked with the Administration for more than two years to reach an acceptable compromise.

Together, in a spirit of cooperative effort rarely witnessed in our highly diverse transportation system, and in a spirit of bipartisanship, we have laid the cornerstone of this Administration's national maritime policy. We have made a real start toward a major objective: returning our merchant marine to pre-eminence on the world's shipping lanes.

Until now, only the United States has limited the activities of carrier conferences. This was done through a combination of regulatory and antitrust oversight of rates and practices. It resulted in insecurity and delays in regulatory approvals. It produced excessive and unpredictable government intervention; and the irritations that arise from the attempt to impose our laws on foreign parties.

We have been guided in our approach to these problems by three major objectives:

- First, this Administration, as you know, is committed to minimizing government intervention in business;
- Second, we want to enable U.S. carriers to compete on grounds similar to its international competitors.

-- Last, it is essential that we maintain a strong U.S. merchant marine.

S.47 has translated these objectives into comprehensive regulatory reform of the ocean liner industry. The legislation will remove numerous burdensome and unnecessary government regulations from the backs of U.S. and foreign flag liner operators. At the same time, it will safeguard the interests of the shipping public. It will speed up regulatory actions of the Federal Maritime Commission which, in the past, have been marked by prolonged and costly proceedings. It will remove a source of friction between the United States and our trading partners, who are critical when our shipping regulations have interfered with the operations of their national flag carriers. It will aid the growth of intermodal transportation and provide more service options to shippers. S.47 is thus a significant achievement in our long struggle to bring about regulatory reform of the ocean shipping industry.

The Act, which will become law in a few moments, is a product of a committed partnership of Congress and the Executive Branch. I am delighted that many of those leaders are with us today as are leaders of the maritime community.

This Act is a significant achievement, but we should not cease our efforts. Let's continue in this same spirit of unity until we complete the task of revitalizing the merchant marine because together, we can achieve these results. Our presence here today proves that and much more.

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