MSP FACTS

• The MSP was originally established in 1996 as a 10-year program for up to 47 vessels in U.S. registry. Reauthorized in 2003 for 10 more years, the number of ships in the fleet was increased from 47 to 60. In 2013, the program was extended to 2025.

• The MSP maintains a core fleet of U.S.-flag, privately-owned ships operating in international commerce which are also available under agreement to provide capacity needed to meet Department of Defense (DOD) requirements during war and national emergencies.

• All MSP dry cargo ships are enrolled in the Voluntary Intermodal Sealift Agreement.

• MSP tankers are enrolled in the Voluntary Tanker Agreement.

• Approximately 121,000 20-foot equivalent units (TEU’s), 3.4 million square feet and 666,800 Bbls of tanker capacity are committed to DOD through MSP obligations.

• MSP ship crews are a major source for the DOD surge fleet. The MSP contributes approximately 2,400 mariner positions to the U.S. deepwater seafarer base.
The Maritime Security Program (MSP) was first passed in 1996, and originally comprised a fleet of 47 U.S. flag militarily-useful vessels. The MSP was reauthorized in 2003 and expanded to a fleet of 60 militarily-useful vessels for FY 2006-2015. In 2013 the MSP was extended to 2025.

The Secretary of Transportation, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense, established a MSP fleet of active, commercially viable, militarily useful, privately-owned vessels that operate in the foreign commerce of the United States.

Congress authorized the current 60 ship MSP fleet on the basis that it was and continues to be the most prudent, economical, and necessary solution to address the current and projected sealift requirements for the United States of America.

The MSP provides financial assistance to operators of U.S. flag vessels that meet certain qualifications. Participating operators are required to make their ships and commercial transportation resources available upon request by the Secretary of Defense during times of war or national emergency.

The MSP maintains a strong, modern U.S.-flag fleet providing military access to vessels and vessel capacity as well as a vast global, intermodal transportation network. This network includes not only vessels, but logistics management services, infrastructure and terminals facilities. The MSP helps retain a labor base of skilled American mariners who are available to crew the U.S. Government-owned strategic sealift fleet, as well as the U.S. commercial fleet, both in peace and war.