

CHRIS VAN HOLLEN
MARYLAND

SH-730 HART SENATE OFFICE
BUILDING WASHINGTON DC 20510
OFFICE (202) 224-4654
FAX (202) 228-0629

United States Senate

APPROPRIATIONS
BANKING, HOUSING, AND
URBAN AFFAIRS
BUDGET
FOREIGN RELATIONS

August 13, 2025

The Honorable Sean Duffy
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave. SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Duffy,

I am writing to express concern about the impact that the docking of two Naval ships at the Port of Baltimore is having on our local community. As you may know, the USNS Pomeroy and the USNS Charlton have been docked at Pier 8 since June 5, 2025.

My office has received significant outreach from Baltimore residents as well as local and state elected officials related to the disruptions these two vessels are continuing to cause for residents in the Fells Point and Locust Point neighborhoods. According to my constituents, the vessels have been running their engines non-stop, emitting a loud and disruptive noise and raising questions about effects on air quality and noise pollution. Additionally, there are high-intensity lights from the ships that are seen in residents' homes late into the night. The U.S. Department of Transportation, Maritime Administration (MARAD) has shared that the ships are waiting for properly sized shore power cables which could take up to six months to procure and install. While MARAD states that this project is a priority and is exploring ways to reduce noise levels, it has shared neither actionable steps nor a clear explanation of the ships' mission in response to inquiries from my office.

Given these concerns, in my role on the Appropriations Committee, I included language in the report to accompany the Fiscal Year 2026 Senate Transportation, Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies Subcommittee bill to address this issue. The language, which was passed on a bipartisan vote by the full Committee, encourages MARAD to work quickly to find solutions to address community concerns related to the ships' presence in Locust Point and to provide a briefing to Congress on the implementation of the relocation plan. It reads in full:

“Vessel Generated Noise While Docked.”—The Committee strongly encourages MARAD to work as expeditiously as possible to identify and implement mitigation measures that will minimize noise impacts to surrounding communities when MARAD ships are not operating on shore power. Not later than 60 days after enactment of this act, MARAD is directed to provide a briefing to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations detailing the planning involved

STATE OFFICES

ROCKVILLE OFFICE
111 ROCKVILLE PIKE
SUITE 960
ROCKVILLE, MD 20850
PHONE (301) 545-1500
FAX (301) 545-1512

STATE CAPITAL OFFICE
60 WEST STREET
SUITE 107
ANNAPOLIS, MD 21401
PHONE (410) 263-1325

CAMBRIDGE OFFICE
204 CEDAR STREET
SUITE 200C
CAMBRIDGE, MD 21613

BALTIMORE OFFICE
1040 PARK AVENUE
SUITE 120
BALTIMORE, MD 21201
PHONE (667) 212-4610
FAX (667) 212-4618

HAGERSTOWN OFFICE
32 WEST WASHINGTON STREET
SUITE 203
HAGERSTOWN, MD 21750
PHONE (301) 797-2826

LARGO OFFICE
1101 MERCANTILE LANE
SUITE 210
LARGO, MD 20774
PHONE (301) 322-6560

in determining the June 2025 relocation of the USNS Pomeroy and USNS Charlton, the timeline and implementation of connecting the ships to shore power, and the mitigation measures taken to minimize noise impacts in surrounding communities.”

While the Committee report requests a briefing within 60 days of enactment, I respectfully request that MARAD provide (1) a detailed explanation of the mission these vessels are supporting at the Port of Baltimore, (2) the concrete steps being taken to expedite the procurement and installation of the necessary equipment to address the ongoing disruptions, and (3) MARAD’s timeline for doing so. Given the continued negative impact on surrounding communities, I urge MARAD to identify and provide alternative solutions to address the legitimate concerns of nearby residents. The current six-month timeframe MARAD has projected is an undue burden for the affected communities.

I appreciate your attention to this matter and ask that you respond by September 2, 2025. Please do not hesitate to reach out to my office should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Chris Van Hollen".

Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator

CC: Sang H. Yi, Acting Maritime Administrator