1. Notice Type: Request for Information (RFI)
The purpose of this announcement is to identify request industry feedback regarding a potential solicitation/acquisition. The Maritime Administration (MARAD) is issuing this RFI notice to determine the availability and technical capability of the U.S. maritime industry to deliver strategic sealift ships. The Government is seeking to identify all qualified sources to assess the industrial base's capability to meet upcoming mission requirements.

The anticipated North American Industry Classification (NAICS) code is 532411, Commercial Air, Rail, and Water Transportation Equipment Rental and Leasing, or 336611 Ship Building and Construction.

THIS IS A REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ONLY. This RFI is being issued for information and planning purposes. It does not constitute a solicitation (Request for Proposal or Request for Quotations) or a promise to issue a solicitation in the future. This RFI does not commit the Government to contract for any supply or service whatsoever. Furthermore, the Government is not seeking proposals at this time. Respondents to this notice are advised that the Government will not pay for any information or administrative costs incurred by responding to this notice. All costs associated with responding to this notice will be solely at the expense of the responding party.

Submissions may be reviewed by Government personnel and support contractors bound by appropriate non-disclosure agreements. Intellectual property, business confidential or other privileged information contained in responses to this RFI will not be distributed outside of the Department of Transportation, except as required by law, regulation, or court order. Any such information must be clearly marked at the bottom of each page.

2. Background
Executive Order 14269, Restoring America's Maritime Dominance, seeks to increase the U.S. Armed Forces and Merchant Marine fleets, and maritime industry base, as quickly as possible.

MARAD has been authorized to acquire up to 10 newly constructed Roll-on/Roll-off (RO/RO) vessels to begin the long-term recapitalization of the aging National Defense Reserve Fleet (NDRF). These vessels will also provide new national assets for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations.

3. Requirement
MARAD is investigating the potential to lease new RO/ROs vessels. Specifically, MARAD is gathering information on tailoring the proven Vessel Construction Manager (VCM) acquisition approach for the National Security Multi-Mission Vessel to allow the Government to purchase or lease vessels on the same contract.

Specifically, MARAD is gauging potential industry interest in a contract that would result in a four-ship block buy under a single contract with one winning offeror. The ownership and financing model divides the four hulls as follows:

Hulls	Ownership / Financing	Charter Arrangement	Charter Term
Ships 1 & 2	Government-funded construction through a VCM; vessels title to Government upon delivery	N/A — Government-owned	N/A
Ships 3 & 4	Privately financed by the winning VCM offeror; vessels title to offeror upon delivery	Time Charter preferred; Bareboat Charter will be considered *Consecutive charters per hull totaling 20 years*	20 years per hull (consecutive charters)

VCM duties include, but are not limited to:

- Select a shipyard
- Develop a contract design with shipyard
- Oversee detailed design for production
- Oversee shipyard construction
- Coordinate Government oversight, inspection, and acceptance activities for the Government-owned vessels (Ships 1 and 2); for the privately financed vessels (Ships 3 and 4), the Government does not presently contemplate routine construction supervision comparable to that applied to the Government-owned hulls, while reserving the right to inspect and verify conformance with the specification, with acceptance occurring at delivery,
- Deliver finished vessels to MARAD

Assumptions:

- Leases will be for newly constructed, coastwise endorsement eligible, RO/ROs built in U.S. shipyards only.
- Leases will be for the vessels only; MARAD will crew and maintain the vessels for the life of the lease.
- Charter period: 20 years per hull, structured as a series of consecutive charters that together total 20 years for each privately financed vessel
- Leases are expected to be for a 20-year fixed period or for five years with options for additional five-year terms.
- MARAD desires an option to buy during or after the lease term.
- Lease term and payments for the RO/RO vessels will be subject to congressional approval. .

MARAD's key characteristics for the RO/ROs

- Maneuvering – Docking/Undocking without tugs
    - Bow Thruster – tunnel thruster in normal maneuvering
    - Stern Thruster – 1,000 kW Tunnel type
    - Flap type rudder for improved low speed maneuverability

- Accommodation
    - Ship Mode – 48 including Master, CE, and 12 Officers and 20 crew members; 2 owner/VIP cabins; 2 single occupancy Cadet cabins; and 6 double occupancy cabins for riders
    - Food Storage for 60 days
    - Fresh Water Storage for 14 days
    - Gray Water Storage for 7 days, Black Water for 14 days
- Design Primary Supporting Documents Completed
    - General Arrangement & Midship Section Drawings
    - Concept level calculations
    - Longitudinal Strength
    - Propeller and Rudder Design
    - Evacuation Analysis
    - Lightship Weight Estimate
    - Intact & Damage Stability
    - Electric Load & Auxiliary Machinery Sizing
    - List of Key Machinery size and potential makers
    - Outline of Performance Specification
- Principle Dimensions
    - Length 211 m (692’)
    - Beam 32.3 m (106)
    - Depth 14.14 m (46’- 4”)
    - Design Draft 8.5 m (28’)
- Propulsion, Speed & Consumption
    - Slow speed diesel 2-stroke – one main engines
    - Installed Power – 12,500 kW main engine
    - Full Speed – 19 knots with 15% sea margin – one engine
    - Cruising Speed – 18 knots with one main engine
    - Uni-fuel for simplicity and operation in the US ECA – MGO only
- Range: 12,000+ miles at 19 knots

4. Government's Intended Action

MARAD is requesting information on the interest of vendors to enter into a VCM and lease contract for the provision of RO/ROs to the Government. This information will be consolidated and MARAD will host an Industry Day to exchange and gather more information to make a lease versus buy decision.

5. Request for Capability Statements
The Government specifically invites candid feedback on the overall acquisition strategy described in this RFI, including the hybrid structure that combines a four-ship block buy with Government ownership of Ships 1 and 2 and private financing and long-term charter of Ships 3 and 4. Respondents are encouraged to identify any fundamental structural concerns or potentially disqualifying issues they foresee in this model — including the division of ownership across hulls, the Vessel Construction Manager construct, the consecutive-charter mechanism totaling 20 years per hull, and the interaction between private financing and the Government's charter commitments — and to recommend alternative structures they believe would better achieve the Government's objectives.

Issues to consider in your response include, but are not limited to the following:

- Commercial maritime industry standards for lease/buy determinations
- Cash flow/Capital considerations
- Price difference between buying a new vessel and a 20-year lease
- Charter rate versus asset value (historical and projected)
- Delivery time to full operational capability
- Liability issues regarding vessel damage and normal wear and tear
- Asset valuation and depreciation
- Ship design
- Ship configuration options
- Title transfer
- Market timing regarding new builds
- Fuel choices and potential power plant obsolescence during lease period
- Potential charter variants for vessels 3 and 4
    - Time Charter: Under a time charter the Government would pay a daily hire rate and assume responsibility for voyage costs (fuel, port costs, cargo handling), while the VCM/owner retains responsibility for vessel maintenance, crewing, and class compliance. For each privately financed hull, the Government contemplates a 20-year charter commitment achieved through a series of consecutive charters that together total 20 years. Respondents should address their ability to structure, finance, and execute this arrangement for both hulls.
    - Bareboat Charter: Under a bareboat arrangement, the Government would assume responsibility for crewing, operation, and maintenance of the chartered vessels. Respondents proposing bareboat structures should address manning, maintenance funding, and class compliance frameworks.
- Early termination provisions, vessel condition at charter expiration, purchase options, and extension terms are areas of Government interest
- Respondents should address the maintenance and classification-maintenance standards they would commit to throughout the charter period, the condition and survey regime applied at each consecutive-charter interface, and the redelivery condition standard at charter expiration—including dry-docking status, class standing, and remediation of deferred maintenance
- Respondents should identify any Jones Act, MARAD, or regulatory considerations relevant to the proposed charter structure

- Use/need of Title XI (Federal Ship Financing Program) loan guarantees or other MARAD financing for the privately financed hulls
- How Title XI interacts with proposed charter structure, including implications for cost of capital, the security interest in the vessels, and the Government's combined position as both charterer and loan guarantor
- Organizational conflicts of interest and specific mitigation strategies detailing how the commercial maritime industry could capably ensure shipyard labor allocation, material quality, and design change-order priorities are balanced equally between the government-owned hulls (ships 1 and 2) and the privately owned hulls (ships 3 and 4) during series construction and concurrent build cycles
- Contrast the hybrid concept against the traditional Vessel Construction Manager (VCM) construct where the four (4) hulls would be 100% government-owned assets from day one.

6. Company Information
Please include the following in your response:
- Company Name and Address (Include Parent Company, if applicable)
- Point of Contact (Name, Title, Email, Phone)
- CAGE Code and UEI Number
- Point of Contact Name and Contact Information (Phone Number and Email Address)

7. Submittal Instructions
All responses should be sent electronically to the Government points of contact, identified below. Any responses submitted through different channels or to a different email will not be considered. When submitting a response, please use the email subject "Response to RFI – MARAD Roll-on/Roll-off Vessels."

Points of Contact
Primary

Brett Scrum, brett.scrum@dot.gov, 202-366-5620

Secondary

Sydney Plante, sydney.plante@dot.gov, 202-366-4105

Submissions are limited to 20 pages, not including title pages, tables of contents, schedule, or acronym lists. All deliverables in response to this notice shall be submitted in Microsoft Word, Microsoft Project (Schedule) or Adobe formal and shall be unclassified. It is the sole responsibility of the submitter to clearly define to the Government what is considered confidential and/or proprietary. Respondents providing confidential and/or proprietary information shall clearly mark such information with appropriate labels. The Government will not evaluate submissions after the twentieth page. Marketing materials are highly discouraged. Submissions should use a minimum of 12-point font, single line spacing, and 1-inch margins.

All responses to this notice are requested no later than 5:00 PM PDT, July 6, 2026.

Disclaimer: The information contained herein is based on the best information available at the time of this notice, is subject to revision, and is not binding on the Government.

8. Small Business Consideration

The anticipated North American Industry Classification (NAICS) code is 532411, Commercial Air, Rail, and Water Transportation Equipment Rental and Leasing, or 336611 Ship Building and Construction. Responses from small businesses are encouraged.