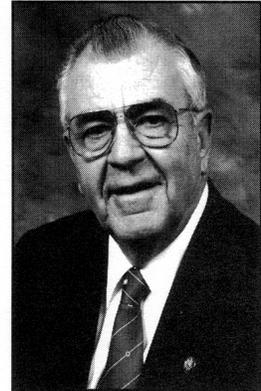


**Congressman Herbert H. Bateman**  
AMERICA'S FIRST DISTRICT — VIRGINIA

# NEWS



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**OPENING REMARKS OF THE  
HONORABLE HERBERT H. BATEMAN, CHAIRMAN,  
PANEL ON THE MERCHANT MARINE**

Good afternoon. My opening remarks will be brief. However, before we address the business of the Panel – consideration of the Maritime Administration budget and authorization request for fiscal year 2001 – I want to welcome the witness who will testify today. I would like to extend the Panel's warm welcome to the Honorable John E. Graykowski, Deputy Administrator for the United States Maritime Administration. Mr. Graykowski is testifying for the Administrator, the Honorable Clyde J. Hart, who is accompanying the Secretary of Transportation on travel out of the country. Mr. Graykowski, we look forward with great interest to hearing from you.

Since its formation, the Panel has steadfastly pursued policies intended to ensure a strong and healthy domestic maritime industry as a critical element of our nation's military and economic strength. I anticipate that a full and open discussion of maritime issues and challenges facing the Maritime Administration will assist us in this pursuit.

I am gravely concerned about the administration's position on key issues affecting the industry and your agency. First among these is the inadequate level of funding for new Title XI loan guarantees contained in the President's Budget request. This program is critical to ensuring a robust commercial shipbuilding industrial base and the requested level sends the wrong signal to the industry. Furthermore, it calls into question the seriousness of this administration's commitment to maintaining that base.

Also troubling is the state of the United States Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, New York. There are significant health and safety problems at the academy due to prolonged neglect and lack of maintenance. That such conditions exist at one of this country's service academies is disturbing.

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Another major area of concern is MARAD's ability to dispose of obsolete vessels in its custody. The backlog of these vessels is large and growing and represents a potentially serious environmental problem.

I welcome your views on these important issues and look forward to the upcoming discussion. However, I would be remiss if I did not note that today's meeting marks the first time that the panel will not receive testimony on the budget from the Panama Canal Commission as the Panel's oversight responsibilities in this area ended with the transfer of the canal last year.

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