

TIMING FOR NEW MARAD ADMINISTRATOR

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Maritime Alert

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Currently, the focus is on President Trump's cabinet-level nominations, but a number of vital presidential appointments remain outstanding. Of the more than 4,000 presidential appointments, nearly 1,000 require Senate confirmation including the Administrator for the U.S. Maritime Administration (MARAD) — a critical position to the U.S. maritime industry.

Based on recent history, presidents have waited well into their first year in office to nominate a MARAD Administrator. The earliest nomination was under President Clinton who nominated Admiral Albert Herberger 5 months after taking office. In contrast, President Obama did not nominate David Matsuda until almost 11 months after he took office. Generally, the Senate has confirmed these appointments within a few months, with the notable exception of Administrator Matsuda who was not confirmed until 6 months after his nomination, 17 months into President Obama's first term.

Although the average over the past five administrations is roughly 8 months for the nomination of the MARAD Administrator, an earlier nomination under President Trump may not be surprising. Based on reports that President Trump plans to give his Cabinet secretaries significant leeway to administer their Departments and Department of Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao's significant experience with maritime issues, including previously serving as Deputy Administrator of MARAD, it is possible that a new MARAD Administrator could be nominated sooner rather than later.

The chart below depicts the timing of recent MARAD Administrator nominations and confirmations.

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