

Questions Submitted for the Record
Submitted by the Honorable Salud Carbajal
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation
Joint Subcommittee Field Hearing on “Port Safety, Security, and Infrastructure Investment”
Friday, April 5, 2025

Questions for Mr. William Paape, Associate Administrator for Ports and Waterways, United States Maritime Administration, United States Department of Transportation:

1. Mr. Paape, At the hearing I asked, “what is MARAD doing to help ports become more resilient to rising oceans and extreme weather events?” of which you requested to take it for the record. Please provide that answer.

MARAD Response: The Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP) authorized by Congress in 2009 and first funded in 2019, funds projects that address a number of factors, including resilience. As provided in 46 U.S.C. 54301(a)(6)(B)(iii), the Secretary shall, in making grant awards, assesses whether, and how well, a proposed project improves a port’s resilience as part of its review of PIDP funding requests.

The Notice of Funding Opportunity for Fiscal Year 2024 PIDP grants defines port resilience as the ability to anticipate, prepare for, adapt to, withstand, respond to, and recover from operational disruptions and sustain critical operations at ports, including disruptions caused by natural or climate-related hazards (such as sea level change, flooding, and extreme storms) or human-made disruptions (such as terrorism and cyberattacks).

In considering a project’s role in improving a port’s resilience to natural or climate-related hazards, reviewers consider how well the project incorporates evidence-based climate resilience and adaptation measures or features. Projects will score more highly on this element of the criterion if the narrative demonstrates that the project: uses best-available climate data sets, information resources, and decision-support tools (including DOT and other federal resources) to assess the climate-related vulnerability and risk of the project; develops and deploys solutions that reduce climate change risks; is included in a Resilience Improvement Plan or similar plan incorporates nature-based solutions/natural infrastructure; advances objectives in the National Climate Resilience Framework; follows the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard, consistent with current law; and includes plans to monitor performance of climate resilience and adaptation measures.

Many PIDP projects include elements that improve resilience by elevating, strengthening, or relocating critical port infrastructure or otherwise implementing systems and strategies to make port facilities better able to withstand rising sea levels and extreme weather events.