

FOREWORD

As the world's leading maritime and trading nation, the United States relies on an effective and efficient marine transportation system to further enhance our global leadership. In *A National Strategy for a New Century*, President Clinton calls for our renewed commitment to promote prosperity, enhance American competitiveness, and invest in a world-class transportation infrastructure for the 21st century. We can meet his vision by working vigilantly together — as one team for America.

Many of you now share responsibility for America's marine transportation system. As you know, this Nation was built on its waterways and ports. So we must make certain they are ready to compete, and win, in the global economy of the 21st century.

To my colleagues in the U.S. Department of Transportation, I welcome your participation. And to those of you representing other Federal agencies and industry, public interest and environmental groups, I welcome your partnership. Thank you for your efforts.

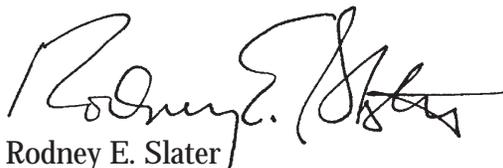
President Clinton, Vice President Gore, and all of us at the U.S. Department of Transportation will continue to vigilantly work with you to ensure that our Nation's marine transportation system is ready for the next century. Our waterways, ports, and their intermodal connections must meet the needs of a wide range of users. They must fulfill the public's expectations. And they must provide safe, efficient, and environmentally responsible transportation.

To identify what changes may be needed, we actively sought perspectives and ideas from everyone affected. We have received valuable input from many users — including commercial, national defense, and recreational interests. By listening and learning, we are working together to improve the system and prepare for the tremendous growth in maritime commerce expected in the years ahead.

President Clinton — in his State of the Union Address — called again for “common sense” government. Let me say that I share his commitment. In this department, I call common sense government ONE DOT. And the work of the Marine Transportation System Task Force has been a shining example of ONE DOT and common sense government at work to put every American first. Clearly, there will be differences of opinion, and differing needs. But know this — every American shares a common goal: to keep the Nation's transportation system the very best in the world.

We are relying on all of you for your continued support and leadership. Help us ensure that America's marine transportation system will serve the interests of the Nation now, and into the future.

We have made great progress. So believe me when I say: the best is yet to come.



Rodney E. Slater
Secretary of Transportation