



US President Donald Trump speaks before signing an executive order in the Oval Office of the White House on Wednesday. Photo: Scanpix

Trump signs executive order to boost US shipbuilding, planning to ‘spend a lot of money’

Order aims to bolster US shipyards as president declares America ‘way, way, way behind’

9 April 2025 21:04 GMT UPDATED 10 April 2025 13:27 GMT

By [Eric Priante Martin](#) in **Miami**

US President Donald Trump signed a long-anticipated executive order aimed at boosting the US shipbuilding industry.

He said the US will be “spending a lot of money” on the sector before signing the order that requires federal officials to create an action plan to create “sustained resiliency” for the maritime industry.



Venture Global advances LNG newbuilding tender with South Korean yards

[Read more](#)

The Oval Office signing ceremony ended several weeks of suspense over the order after a previous draft, making the rounds in Washington, was pulled back.

“We’re way, way, way behind,” Trump said of the US shipbuilding sector. “We used to build a ship a day. And now we don’t do a ship a year, practically. We have the capacity to do it.”

According to a description by an off-camera White House official in the video, the order was prepared by the National Security Council and its leader, national security advisor Michael Waltz.

It includes a “number of significant policy steps” aimed at restoring American dominance in shipbuilding and shipping.

Article continues below the advert

Trump signed the document and then held the order up for cameras to see.

“That’s a good one,” he said.

Investing in maritime

In addition to seeking an action plan, the order instructs defence secretary Pete Hegseth to assess ways to spur both government and private investment in the maritime industrial base.

It also orders homeland security secretary Kristi Noem to apply the Harbor Maintenance Tax and other charges on foreign cargo entering land borders with Canada and Mexico.



The order tasks homeland security secretary Kristi Noem with applying the Harbor Maintenance Tax and land borders. Photo: Gage Skidmore/CC BY-SA 2.0

The executive order also sets up a Maritime Security Trust Fund that would provide consistent funding for the industry, although it does not say how the president has the power to set up such a fund absent congressional action.

The order also seeks to increase the fleet of US-flag commercial vessels trading in international markets and between US ports.



Fear and loathing: How US climate talks exit is rattling the IMO

[Read more](#)

An earlier draft included assessing port fees on Chinese-linked ships, but Trump’s final order leaves it to US trade representative Jamieson Greer to make recommendations. He is already planning to do so by 17 April.

The order was one of several signed by the president in quick succession. They included an order on monopolistic practices and another aiming to “make America’s showers great again” by ending what the White House described as former President Barack Obama’s war on water pressure.


Shipbuilders Council of America president Matthew Paxton said his trade group supports Trump’s action to “restore and strengthen” yards.

“The establishment of a maritime action plan that includes a Maritime Security Trust Fund, strategic commercial fleet programme, along with new tax credits, grants and strategic investments, will provide a powerful environment to rebuild our shipbuilding capacity and build the fleet of the future,” he said.

Strengthening yards

“A strong US shipyard industry is essential not only for our economic security but also for our homeland and national security.”

Paxton said the order made it clear that the administration is “deeply committed” to re-energising and investing in the country’s shipyards.



TradeWinds Wavelength - a weekly shipping news show
Are Trump's tariffs terrifying shipping?

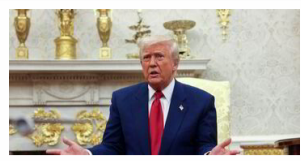
April 4, 2025 · 23 min · [Listen later](#)

[Share](#) [+ Follow](#) [Acast](#)

[View terms](#)

“We are eager to begin this important work alongside policymakers and industry partners to restore America’s shipbuilding strength for the security and growth of our nation,” he said. “US shipbuilders stand at the ready!”

The Marine Engineers Beneficial Association, a major US maritime labour union, also applauded the order.



**Trump's IMO bombshell:
US pulls out of carbon
talks with retaliation
threat**

[Read more](#)

Secretary-treasurer Roland Rexha said it comes after decades of neglect, as well as unfair practices by China and other US adversaries.

"The Covid pandemic exposed our inability to move our own goods as a nation, and this decisive action implements a 'whole of government' approach to reinvigorate US shipping and address serious national security concerns. Whether you are a farmer in Kansas moving wheat or you own a car dealership in New York, knowing that goods are moving on US ships secures American progress and our economic independence," he said.

"Today's action is a vital first step in driving both public and private investment toward a meaningful pathway to revitalise US shipbuilding and position the US as a global leader in maritime policy." ([Copyright](#)).

[Regulation](#) [US](#) [Donald Trump](#)

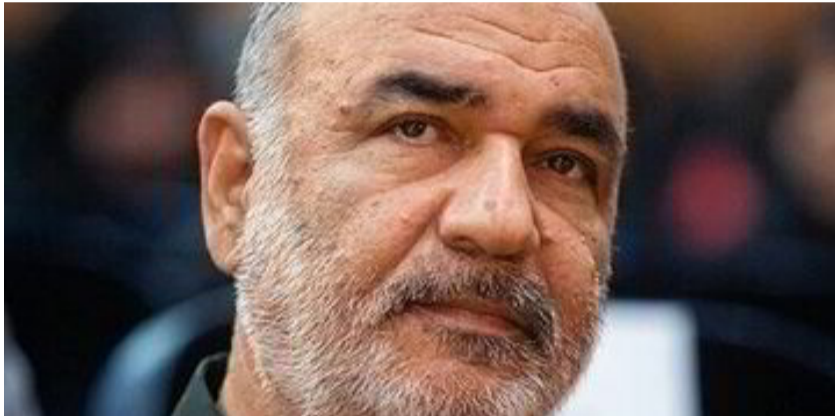
TRENDING TODAY

[Shipyards](#)



**Leon Patitsas
and investor
EMF score huge
profit with sale
of car carrier
pair**

[Tankers](#)



**Iran seizes third
tanker in under
10 days in oil
smuggling
clampdown**

[Opinion](#)



**Brutal. A failure:
Closed-door
climate talks end
without
agreement**