

## Trump: U.S. Will Order 40 Big Icebreakers for the Coast Guard



Polar Security Cutter (illustration courtesy Bollinger)

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In a speech last week in North Carolina, President Donald Trump suggested that the U.S. would soon be ordering 40 big icebreakers for the Coast Guard, and that Canada wants in on the deal.

[Asked](#) about U.S. trade relations with Britain, Trump gave his thoughts on why Canada should become the 51st U.S. state. The U.S. is losing too much money to Canada on trade deficits, he said, and joining the U.S. would mean lower taxes (and no U.S. tariffs) for Canadians.

"Why are we paying all of that money to Canada when, you know, we — we could use it ourselves, right? You know, we ordered — we're going to order about 40 Coast Guard big icebreakers. Big ones. And all of a sudden, Canada wants a piece of the deal. I say, 'Why are we doing that?'" Trump said. "I mean, I like doing that if they're a state, but I don't like doing that if they're a nation. . . . I would love to see Canada be the 51st state."

The U.S. Coast Guard currently has funds from Congress for a planned three-vessel order for the Polar Security Cutter program, built by Bollinger. The first was approved in late [December](#) after years of delay, and the program faces cost [overruns](#). The service's last icebreaker study suggested a need for at least three more medium icebreakers in addition to the current program of record, and its regional icebreaker fleet for the Great Lakes is also advancing in age.

At present, the service's seagoing fleet has one heavy icebreaker and one medium icebreaker - both aging - and one "bridging strategy" icebreaker, a commercial [conversion](#) that will fill gaps until delivery of the first Polar Security Cutter.

Canada has had prior involvement with America's icebreaker ambitions. Last year, under the previous administration, the U.S., Canada and Finland announced an icebreaker technology-transfer [initiative](#) called the ICE Pact (Icebreaker Collaboration Effort). Finland's Helsinki Shipyard is the recognized leader in icebreaker construction outside of Russia, and it was recently purchased by Davie, the Canadian shipyard that holds Canada's "program icebreaker" [contract](#). Davie has pledged to [invest](#) in a U.S. facility to build icebreakers for the international market, once it secures the right shipyard partner.

"It is about providing the capability for like-minded nations to uphold international rules, norms, and standards to sustain peace and stability in the Arctic and Antarctic regions for generations to come," the three nations said in a statement at the time.