

## Trump prioritising shipping more than any past US President says FMC chair

Federal Maritime Commission chair Louis Sola urges port authority executives to make their views known on Capitol Hill.

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Louis Sola chair of the FMCCredit: Federal Maritime Commission

“We’ve never had a President prioritise shipping as much as this one has, in the past fifty-seven days,” states Louis Sola the new Chair of the Federal Maritime Commission (FMC).

[FMC](#) chair Sola gave the keynote address at the Washington, D.C. Legislative Summit of the American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA) in mid-March, some eight weeks after Donald Trump assumed office.

Sola, from Miami, Florida, who had served as an FMC Commissioner in the previous Trump term (January 2017- January 2021), and, prior to that on the Florida Board of Pilots Commissioners.

He told the AAPA audience that: “POTUS [President of the United States] knows shipping; I can attest to that...I have spoken to him numerous times about shipping- and he understands supply chains, as well.”

With “a lot of maritime bills coming up” he implored AAPA attendees, which include the top executives of the major ports, along with their colleagues from mid-sized and smaller entities, to “make your views known” on Capitol Hill. “Now is the time to be involved,” he said to attendees who might have concerns about Executive Orders and proposed legislation.

The AAPA is the leading advocate for the ports business in the States, and works very closely with US Senators, Congressional representatives, and their staffs on policy matters. The AAPA meeting comes at time that shipping-linked issues, including the US Trade Representative office looking into Chinese vessel calls, tariffs- a major influencer of trade flows, and permitting of new LNG projects, among other matters are permeating the new Administration.

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Regulators may sometimes be removed from the entities that are looking after and the businesses within its domain, but that's not the case with Sola. Early in his remarks, he described his close relationship with Mario Cardero and Paul Anderson- two key influencers in the ports business, both of whom had previously served on the FMC.

Cardero is now the Executive Director at the [Port of Long Beach](#), had served as FMC Chair from 2013 through early 2017 (under President Obama). Meanwhile Anderson is the President/ CEO at Port Tampa Bay, and currently serving as the AAPA's Chairperson, previously was an FMC Commissioner during the George W. Bush years 2003- 2008.

Looking forward to possible actions during Trump 2.0, Sola told his AAPA audience that: "We are going to see an investment in the US maritime sector that I don't think that I've seen in my lifetime....we have the President's ear, as a priority."

In his remarks, he emphasized a continuation of the FMC's activities in recent years; "We are going to protect the integrity of the marketplace," he said, adding that "we are going to monitor the Alliances, and the Alliances' carriers...we are going to act against unreasonable fees and surcharges".

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Emphasizing fairness, he said: "If our ship is not welcome in their ports, then their ship is not welcome in our ports".

Sola, who spent considerable time in Panama earlier in his career, also stressed the importance of creating a competitive market for cargo handling cranes as evidenced by contacts from concerned companies, adding that: "It's going to start with cranes...national security is also economic security." In response to attendee questions, Sola said that he was supportive of growth in a [US](#)-flagged fleet (not necessarily US built).

The agency has recently announced that it will be looking at shipping congestion at key points including the English Channel, the Malacca Strait, the Northern Sea Passage, the Singapore Strait, the [Panama Canal](#), the Strait of Gibraltar, and the Suez Canal, and their potential impacts on interfaces with vessels in liner trades calling at US ports - this is the FMC domain.

Following up on a question by attendee Lauren Beagen, known for "The Maritime Professor" supply chain consultancy and the "By Land and Sea" podcast, regarding objectives of this inquiry, Sola spoke about the possibly deleterious impacts on American consumers for example, from surcharges that get passed through; he explained that it's going to be a fact-finding exercise initially; "if do have affected parties, then we can go and look at remedies."

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