The America’s Marine Highway Program (also known as the Short Sea Transportation Program) is administered by the Maritime Administration (MARAD), with the goal of developing and further incorporating maritime transportation into the US surface transportation system. The Marine Highway system encompasses the United States’ commercially-navigable waterways, including the Great Lakes. The Marine Highway was program was created by the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 with the intent of reducing congestion and reducing air emissions on highways and railroads through the designation of "Marine Highways." Examples of intended benefits from the Marine Highways program include:

- Creating and sustaining jobs in U.S. vessels and in U.S. ports and shipyards;
- Increasing the state of good repair of the U.S. transportation system by reducing maintenance costs from wear and tear on roads and bridges;
- Increasing the US’s economic competitiveness by adding new, cost-effective freight and passenger transportation capacity;
- Increasing the environmental sustainability of the U.S. transportation system by using less energy and reducing air emissions (such as greenhouse gases) per passenger or ton-mile of freight moved. Further environmental sustainability benefits come from the mandatory use of modern engine technology on designated projects;
- Increasing public safety and security by providing alternatives for the movement of hazardous materials outside heavily populated areas;
- Increasing transportation system resiliency and redundancy by providing transportation alternatives during times of disaster or national emergency;

The Maritime Transportation System (MTS) has been designated as **M-90** (a parallel route to I-90 in the U.S.). The system also has two small sub-routes the M-75 Detroit-Windsor crossing, and the M-177 Lake Erie crossing.

The Marine Highways program has supported at least three research projects relevant to the MTS. These projects are are intended to help their respective applicants identify appropriate actions and resources to develop proposed short sea shipping services:

- **M-75 Detroit/Wayne County Ferry Project**, a proposed cross-border passenger service between Detroit and Windsor.
- **M-90 Great Lakes Shuttle Service**, a proposed truck and general freight ferry service between Milwaukee and Muskegon. The goal of the service is to reduce freight-related congestion, road maintenance, and emissions in the Chicago area, and provide competitive service.
- **M-90 Lake Erie Shuttle**, a project to carry containerized automotive cargo between Monroe, Michigan and Cleveland, Ohio.

MARAD provides Marine Highway Grants to support the implementation of previously-
identified projects such as the ones above. Currently no MTS projects are funded by Marine Highway Grants, but the program could be used to fund MTS-relevant projects in the future.

**TYPE**
Investment

**ISSUE**
Maritime Transportation