

overland shipping charges.”

Panelists and participants discussed the challenges facing the port, including dwindling public resources for expansion, increased need for security and the ongoing burden of dredging to keep Baltimore channels open to the largest vessels.

But despite these challenges, the overall tone was optimistic and upbeat.

“The Port is a key economic engine for the state,” said Aris Melissaratos, Secretary of the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development. “We have a fantastic interstate highway system. We have thousands of acres of land that can be developed for distribution centers... Think about how much more we can do. The public sector can be the catalyst, but the private sector can make it happen.”

Rupert Denney, president of the Maryland Maritime Association, agreed, saying, “I think the more dynamic growth will come from the private sector.” He added that all parties supporting the Port have to stress the value of protecting deepwater berths, and not squandering finite maritime sites for short-term gains.

“Some people seem more interested in building condos and arguing about dredging [than protecting the Port’s future],” he said. “There are only so many deepwater ports. Manufacturers who rely on ships need ports ... We need to preserve them and we need to preserve the jobs.”

Chairman Steven Blust of the Federal Maritime Commission said fostering teamwork and cooperation would be essential for the Port’s success in the future.

“We need to bring together all the parties — public and private, the support services, the manufacturers” to ensure the viability of this important state resource, he said.

James J. White, executive director of the Maryland Port Administration, acknowledged there were challenges facing the Port of Baltimore, like every other port in the nation.

“Sure, there are tough issues. Certainly land, labor, security and dredging are tough issues. We have to work harder due to limited resources, but that is certainly something we’re prepared to do. Our team will give it everything we’ve got to continue our success.” 🌐



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Among those attending the World Trade Center Institute forum were: Secretary of the Maryland Department of Transportation Robert L. Flanagan; former Congresswoman and Port consultant Helen Delich Bentley; and Federal Maritime Commission Chairman Stephen Blust.

Keeping the Port of Baltimore Competitive in a Global World

Government and corporate leaders meet to discuss the Port's future

Stressing cooperation between public and private sectors and across governmental agencies, a diverse panel of experts met in early February to discuss the future of the Port of Baltimore.

More than 150 participants representing 75 businesses and organizations attended the forum, sponsored by the World Trade Center Institute and titled, "Keeping the Port of Baltimore Competitive in a Global World."

Speakers at the gathering, held at the World Trade Center in downtown Baltimore, included three state cabinet secretaries, current and former U.S. congressmen, the chairman of the Federal Maritime Commission, the Executive Director of the Maryland Port Administration

and notables from maritime corporations and associations.

"This is an impressive gathering and impressive turnout," remarked Deb Kielty, president of the World Trade Center Institute, a non-profit organization that promotes the Port of Baltimore and Maryland businesses internationally.

Robert L. Flanagan, Secretary of the Maryland Department of Transportation, offered opening remarks, saying the Port of Baltimore holds strategic advantages over other East Coast ports, which must be leveraged to its best advantage.

"Baltimore is 170 miles closer to Chicago than Norfolk. A third of the country's population and manufacturing centers can be reached overnight by truck," he said. "Using the Port of Baltimore can reduce