U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Maritime
Administration**

1200 New Jersey Avenue. S.E.
Washington. DC 20590

July 30, 2026

Mr. Thomas J. Smith
U.S. Census Bureau
4600 Silver Hill Rd
Washington, DC
20233

RE: *Federal Register* notice of MAY 20, 2026, for the 2027 Commodity Flow Survey (OMB Number:0607-0932)

Dear Mr. Smith:

The Department of Transportation – Maritime Administration (MARAD) adamantly supports continuation of data collection by the U.S. Census Bureau for the Commodity Flow Survey (CFS). The data provided by this survey are critical to MARAD's strategic planning and decision making.

Direct survey data serves as a vital foundation for modern analytical tools. By providing real-time validation, qualitative depth, and direct feedback from key stakeholders, this primary research ensures automated and predictive models remain accurately grounded in real-world conditions.

MARAD uses the CFS data directly to ascertain multimodal domestic freight flows on our nation's transportation system as a key component for use with modern analytical tools. As you may be aware, the CFS provides the only nationally consistent data set for multimodal domestic transportation. The CFS data form the basis of many national level multimodal freight analysis models, including the Freight Analysis Framework (FAF) that is managed jointly between the Federal Highway Administration and the Bureau of Transportation Statistics.

MARAD also relies on CFS data indirectly through the Bureau of Economic Analysis's benchmark input-output (I-O) accounts. MARAD relies on I-O account data as input into numerous studies that promote and protect the U.S. maritime industry. Recently, MARAD in conjunction with the American Waterways Operators completed a study on the importance of the tug and barge industry.

MARAD suggests, that if practical, the survey be designed to be conducted more frequently (biennially) to capture relatively rapid changes in transportation logistics.

Please keep MARAD informed as you make decisions regarding the future of the CFS.

Sincerely,

Douglas McDonald

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Director, Office of Policy and Plans
U.S. Department of Transportation –
Maritime Administration