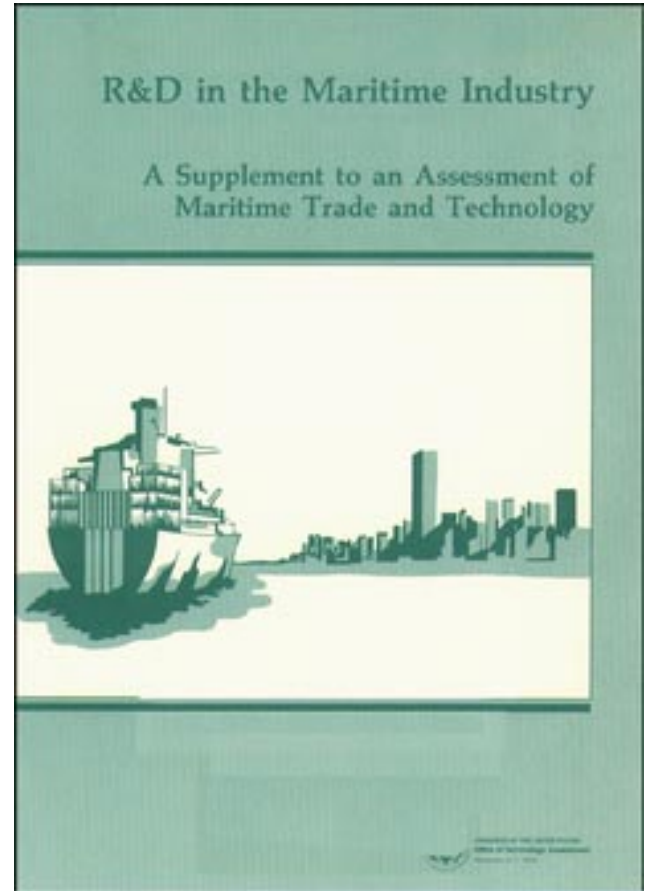


*R&D in the Maritime Industry: A  
Supplement to an Assessment of Maritime  
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# Foreword

Since the publication of "An Assessment of Maritime Trade and Technology" by OTA in October 1983, various proposals have been made to provide incentives for research and development (R&D) in an effort to enhance the industry's competitive position. Consequently, the Senate and House Subcommittees on the Merchant Marine jointly requested OTA to analyze the Federal role and/or incentives for improved maritime R&D including new institutional arrangements, financing and priority setting. This supplement is in reply to that request.

In order to investigate the subject in more detail than our original assessment, OTA conducted an industry-wide survey, receiving replies from approximately 85 U.S. ship and barge operating and building firms. Respondents to the survey represented about one-half of the firms and work force in these two major sectors of the U.S. maritime industry. The results of that survey and other analyses are contained in this supplement.

The OTA survey provided some valuable basic data on R&D activities and views about problems and opportunities from a broad spectrum of the maritime industry. After preparing a draft report on the survey, OTA circulated it for comments and held a workshop to discuss survey results and proposals for possible changes in Federal institutions. OTA sincerely appreciates the assistance provided by the workshop participants and others who offered comments on the draft report. We especially appreciate the help of Dr. Leslie Kanuk who advised on the design of the survey itself and the evaluation of the responses.

It appears from our analysis that, while aspects of the Federal maritime R&D effort are useful and productive, a number of problems limit the benefits to industry and hinder the pursuit of such national goals as technological preeminence. Problems identified with existing Federal maritime R&D include: difficulty with government contracting procedures, limited dissemination of R&D results, restricted involvement of some sectors of the industry, and difficulty with initiating cooperative R&D in some sectors.

The major issue highlighted by the OTA survey and analyses is whether the Federal role in maritime R&D is adequate or whether it should be enhanced for the benefit of both the maritime industry and the Nation as a whole. While a wide diversity of opinion exists concerning the need for and the nature of a new maritime R&D institution, the value in a new approach is the promise of addressing some of the more important problems noted above. One or more of a range of alternative approaches could be put in place. Since the existing institutions also have valuable aspects, it is important to preserve the successful elements in any future changes.



JOHN H. GIBBONS  
*Director*

## **OTA Workshop Participants February 7, 1985**

James B. Acton  
Todd Pacific Shipyards Corp.

Charles A. Bookman  
National Research Council  
Marine Board

James A. Higgins  
Consultant

John Leeper  
Simat International, Inc.

Zelvin Levine  
Maritime Administration

Larry Mallon  
House Committee on Merchant Marine  
and Fisheries

John W. McInnes  
Naval Material Command

Naresh M. Maniar  
M. Rosenblatt & Son, Inc.

James D. Palmer  
J. J. Henry Co., Inc.

Bill Phillips  
Metal Trades Department  
AFL/CIO

Virgil Rinehart  
Maritime Administration

## **Report Review Group**

Richard F. Brunner  
Avondale Shipyards Inc.

Peter J. Finnerty  
Sealand Industries, Inc.

Arthur Haskell  
Matson Navigation Co.

Edwin M. Hood  
National Steel & Shipbuilding Co.

Everett C. Hunt  
Webb Institute of Naval Architecture

Leslie Kanuk  
Baruch College

Peter Kopcsak  
Ingram Barge Co.

Charles M. Lynch  
ARCO Marine Inc.

James J. Murphy  
General Dynamics  
Quincy Shipbuilding Division

Peter M. Palermo  
Naval Sea Systems Command

Eugene Schorsch  
Bethlehem Steel Corp.

Rollin J. Shoemaker  
Newport News Shipbuilding Co.

## OTA Project Staff—Maritime R&D

John Andelin, *Assistant Director, OTA*  
*Science, Information and Natural Resources Division*

Robert W. Niblock, *Oceans and Environment Program Manager*

### *Project Staff*

Peter A. Johnson, Project *Director*

Chris Ansell      Nan Harllee

### *Administrative Staff*

Kathleen A. Beil      Jacquelynne R. Mulder      Kay N. Patteson

### *Contractors*

Judith Roales, *Editor*