

Darrell L. Conner

Government Affairs Counselor

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OVERVIEW

Darrell Conner is a government affairs counselor in the firm's Public Policy and Law practice group, one of the largest policy groups in the United States. He has more than 30 years of experience working with Congress and the executive branch. Since 2017, he has been recognized by The Hill as one of the nation's Top Lobbyists. Darrell is known for his experience in the maritime and fisheries sectors, where he combines his substantive knowledge of those areas with his understanding of policymaking in government and Congress to assist clients with achieving their goals. Darrell leads the firm's Maritime Policy practice group and was previously a leader of the Public Policy and Law practice group.

Darrell's practice focuses on federal government relations, where he represents clients on a range of matters, including:

- Domestic and international shipping (including military sealift);
- Port and maritime security;
- International trade;
- Fisheries and natural resources;
- Domestic energy policy;
- Transportation and infrastructure; and
- Federal appropriations and budget.

He also has extensive legislative experience in general public policy analysis and planning, strategic counseling, and coalition management and coordination. Darrell also assists clients in incorporating public policy into their strategic planning, integrating public relations into their legal and advocacy activities, and legislative drafting.

His principal representations include cargo and passenger vessel operators, a ship classification society, transportation product manufacturers and service providers, fishermen and other fishery stakeholders, and a leading coalition of US maritime interests.

He has worked with the Department of Transportation (including the office of the Secretary, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, and the Maritime Administration), the Department of Commerce (specifically, the office of the Secretary, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and National Marine Fisheries Service), the Department of Homeland Security (US Coast Guard), and the Department of Defense (including US Transportation Command).

Darrell is previously served as a member of the Executive Committee of the International Propeller Club of the United States, and is a past president of the Washington, DC, chapter of the International Propeller Club.

He served on the staff of the Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries of the US House of Representatives under its ranking member, Congressman Bob Davis (R-MI).

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Recognized by *The Legal 500 United States* as a Recommended Lawyer for Shipping - Litigation and Regulation, 2024-2026
- *The Hill's* Top Lobbyists 2024, *The Hill*, December 2024
- *The Hill*'s: Top Lobbyists 2023, *The Hill*, December 2023

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- The Jones Act: What Maritime Operators Need to Know, WIMOs Webinar, October 2026

EDUCATION

- B.A., James Madison University, 1991

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP *POWERED BY HUB*

- 24 July 2026, House Passes Historic NDAA Maritime Amendments
- 9 April 2026, The Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Request: A Historic Investment in US Maritime Dominance
- 24 March 2026 , Foreign Vessels Operating Under the Jones Act Waiver Should Consider What Other US Laws May Apply
- 25 February 2026, White House Releases Plan to "Restore America's Maritime Dominance"
- 9 October 2025, The Essential Guide to the Jones Act
- 1 October 2025, First-Ever Fisheries Subsidies Agreement Enters Into Force at the World Trade Organization
- 2 September 2025, Angling for New Ideas: NOAA Fisheries Seeks Public Comment on Boosting American Seafood Competitiveness

- 18 July 2024, What Overturning Chevron Means for the Way Congress Does Its Business
- 8 February 2024, Washington, D.C.'s Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development Proposes Rules to Implement Downtown Real Property Tax Abatement Legislation
- 1 February 2024, January 2024 Accolades
- 25 January 2023, January 2023 Accolades
- 5 January 2023, FY23 Defense Authorization Bill Makes Changes to Address "Novel and Problematic" Jones Act Waivers
- 16 September 2022, Federal Maritime Commission Seeking Comment on New Rulemaking Regarding Prohibition Against Ocean Common Carrier Refusal to Negotiate on Vessel Space Accommodations
- January 2022, January 2022 Accolades
- 14 July 2021, Spotlight on the International Maritime Sector as the Biden Administration Looks to Address Competition Activities
- 14 June 2021, Shipping Emissions Remain a Focus of Reintroduced House Bill
- May 2021, May 2021 Accolades
- April 2021, April 2021 Accolades
- 19 April 2021, Coast Guard Subcommittee Talks Decarbonization
- 13 April 2021, Congress Set to Discuss Maritime Decarbonization
- 5 March 2021, What a Clean Future Means For Maritime
- 14 January 2021, Predicting the Biden Administration's Impact on the U.S. Maritime Industry
- 18 November 2020, Election Briefing: Transportation and Infrastructure Outlook
- 26 October 2020, House Climate Bill Takes Aim At Shipping Emissions
- 11 September 2020, USDA Provides Seafood Trade Relief
- 8 September 2020, Five Things the Maritime Industry Should Know as the 116th Congress Concludes
- 7 July 2020, Preparing for the Next Hanjin: The Unique Challenges and Ripple Effects of Maritime Insolvency and Restructuring
- 6 July 2020, Maritime Industry Prepares For Busy Legislative Stretch
- 2 July 2020, COVID-19: Renewed and Unique Opportunity for Fishing Industry in Paycheck Protection Program
- 15 May 2020, Major Changes in Title XI, the Federal Ship Financing Program
- 15 May 2020, COVID-19: Trump Administration Takes Actions to Assist U.S. Fishing Industry

- 15 May 2020, COVID-19: Trump Administration Takes Actions to Assist U.S. Aquaculture
- 3 April 2020, COVID-19: The Continuing Impacts of COVID-19 on Transportation & Logistics
- 2 April 2020, COVID-19: Supply Chain Impacts
- 26 March 2020, COVID-19: Impacts to Transportation & Logistics
- 23 March 2020, COVID-19: Impacts to Transportation & Logistics
- 20 March 2020, COVID-19: Retail and Supply Chain Outlook
- March 2020, COVID-19: Analysis of White House National Emergency Declaration and Implementation
- 5 March 2020, DOT Announces $225 Million in Port Grant Opportunities
- 5 February 2020, DOT Announces Funding Opportunity for Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects
- 23 January 2020, Industry Predictions for 2020 From the Maritime Professionals at K&L Gates
- 8 January 2020, The Can-Do Congress?

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

- "What Chevron's End Means For How Congress Does Business," *Law360*, 30 July 2024
- "Biden Competition Order May Shift Ocean Carriers' Course," *Law360*, 20 July 2021

NEWS & EVENTS

- 5 May 2026, K&L Gates Advises American Maritime Partnership on Defense of Jones Act Constitutional Challenge

OTHER MEDIA MENTIONS

- Quoted, "Meet the Behind-the-Scenes Team Shaping Trump's Maritime Strategy," *Tradewinds News*, 22 April 2025
- Quoted, "Congress is waking up to US maritime vulnerability. Will that survive the election?" *TradeWinds*, 30 October 2024
- Mentioned, "The Hill's 2022 Top Lobbyists (Excerpts)," *The Hill, Yahoo! News* and *The Wichita Eagle*, 7 December 2022
- Quoted, "BigLaw Lobbying Shops Report Huge Earnings Surge In 2021," *Law360*, 24 January 2022.
- Quoted, "Combined, Brownstein and Akin Gump Brought In $110M in DC Lobbying Revenue in 2021," NationalLawJournal.com, 20 January 2022.

- What it's Like Running One of the Largest Lobbying & Policy Groups in the U.S., *The Political Life Podcast*, 11 January 2021

AREAS OF FOCUS

- Public Policy and Law
- Fisheries and Aquaculture
- International Trade, Investment Controls, and National Security
- Maritime Compliance
- Maritime Regulatory
- Maritime Transactions and Finance

INDUSTRIES

- Energy
- Hydrogen
- Maritime
- Offshore Wind Energy
- Rail and Roads
- Transportation and Logistics

REPRESENTATIVE EXPERIENCE

- Advising the broadest and deepest coalition ever assembled to represent the domestic maritime industry on legislative and regulatory matters involving the domestic coastwise laws.
- Working with a major intermodal equipment provider association with legislative and regulatory matters at the Federal Maritime Commission, the Department of Transportation, White House, and other agencies, as well as in Congress.
- Assisting a major cruise shipping company obtain legislation permitting the company to operate U.S.-flag ships in coastwise service, creating thousands of American jobs and generating millions of dollars in economic activity.
- Worked closely with maritime regulatory agency to obtain necessary approvals for the transfers of Maritime Security Program agreements to major container shipping company.
- Represented maritime clients in successfully persuading Congress to appropriate funding for the Title XI shipbuilding loan guarantee program.

- Assisted in the development and enactment of a multi-year, multi-million dollar program for dual use military-commercial sealift capability with the U.S. Transportation Command.
- Advising a major ship classification society on various public policy matters.
- Serving as primary outside government relations advisor to trailer manufacturing trade organization.
- Helping a West Coast fisherman's association defeat legislative efforts to grant harvesting quota shares to fish processors and to obtain language regarding ongoing efforts to rationalize the fishery.
- Assisting conservation interests in defeating legislative initiatives in appropriations and authorizing bills that could result in overfishing or overcapitalizing in U.S. fisheries.
- Providing policy and political advice to fishermen and conservation organizations regarding fisheries management and conservation measures, including specifically measures contained in the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.