

M.E.B.A. Wins Right to Represent WSF Port Engineers Following Organizing Effort & Commission Decision

A hard fought effort to bring Washington State Ferry Port Engineers (six positions) under the M.E.B.A. banner has been rewarded after the employees' bargaining status was affirmed by a State Commission in a recently released decision.

M.E.B.A. already represents the engineers and oilers in the WSF fleet, but had sought to bring the Port Engineers and Senior Port Engineers into the fold as well. Following an M.E.B.A. organizing effort early last year, members in the affected positions signed pledge cards and were onboard with becoming a part of the Union. However, the employer contended that the Port Engineers and Senior Port Engineers, as part of the Washington Management Service, were ineligible to exercise collective bargaining rights under the Marine Employees Act. M.E.B.A. disagreed with the State's interpretation asserting that the governing statutes do not exclude Port Engineers and Sr. Port Engineers from union representation. This sparked a time-consuming legal process begun in the fall of 2016 with the State's Public Employment Relations Commission. The Commission weighed the matter carefully and released its decision this month affirming the M.E.B.A.'s position that the petitioned-for employees are not excluded from collective bargaining under the Revised Code of Washington.



Photo: Matthew Hunnewell

The Union can now begin working toward a new CBA covering the six positions which include: Senior Port Engineer Fleet Maintenance, Port Engineer Digital Systems, three Fleet Maintenance Port Engineer positions and the Vessel Maintenance Program Analyst.

The M.E.B.A. organizing effort and subsequent process with the State Commission were headed up by Seattle Branch Agent Jeff Duncan and M.E.B.A. WSF Representative Isaac Seidman. Attorney Mike McCarthy and WSF Sr. Port Engineer Wesley Sweet were instrumental in the effort and M.E.B.A. was also supplemented with valuable assistance from others including Seattle Patrolman Kevin Cross.