

# MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

*"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"*



## **M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES**

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In this issue//Latest Matson Newbuild Christened at Philly Shipyard//Trump Budget Calls for Full MSP Funding; Bad News for Food-Aid Cargoes, Title XI//Need for More U.S.-Flag Ships Highlighted at Joint Congressional Hearing//Sen. Mike Lee Looking to Sink the Jones Act//Maritime Labor Alliance Summit in FL//M.E.B.A. Joins TTD in Calling for Infrastructure Investment//OCEAN GIANT Concludes Antarctic Mission; CG Icebreaker Limp Home//

### **LATEST MATSON NEWBUILD CHRISTENED IN PHILADELPHIA**

U.S. Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard (D-HI) smashed the ceremonial bottle of champagne on the hull of Matson's beautiful new containership KAIMANA HILA at a christening that took place at Pennsylvania's Philly Shipyard last weekend. Translating to "Diamond Head," the name of Hawaii's iconic landmark crater near Waikiki Beach, the 850-foot long, 3,600 TEU KAIMANA HILA, along with sister ship DANIEL K. INOUYE which is already in service, are the largest containerships ever built in the U.S.

Weighing in at over 51,400 metric tons, the 850-foot long, 3,600 TEU capacity KAIMANA HILA and DKI are also Matson's fastest vessels with a top speed of nearly 24 knots, helping ensure on-time deliveries in Hawaii from Matson's three West Coast terminals in Seattle, Oakland and Long Beach. In addition, both Aloha Class vessels incorporate the latest environmentally friendly technology, including dual fuel engines that can be adapted to use liquefied natural gas (LNG), double hull fuel tanks, fresh water ballast systems and a more fuel efficient hull design.

M.E.B.A. Chief Engineer John O'Donnell has been overseeing construction of the vessel since May of last year. Chief Engineer Joe Crell has been with the new ship since December and 1<sup>st</sup> A/E Brad McDermott has been ensuring smooth work aboard the ship for a month. M.E.B.A. engineers recently joining the vessel include 2<sup>nd</sup> A/E Yaw Kyei, 3<sup>rd</sup> A/E Chris Kewley and 3<sup>rd</sup> A/E Michael Kelly. John O'Donnell is serving the vessel as Port Engineer.

In addition to the two Philly Shipyard newbuilds, San Diego's NASSCO Shipyard is in the process of constructing two combination container and roll-on/roll-off (Con-Ro) vessels that will join Matson's fleet following their completion in late 2019 (LURLINE) and in the second quarter of 2020 (MATSONIA).

### **TRUMP BUDGET CALLS FOR FULL MSP FUNDING; FOOD AID CARGOES, TITLE XI ZEROED OUT**

President Trump finally embraced the Maritime Security Program in his third budget request since he came to office. His \$4.75 trillion Fiscal Year 2020 budget recommendation asks for big money for the military while paring back spending for domestic programs. The President requested full funding for MSP (\$300 million) for the first time following his first two budget requests which recommended \$210 million (FY '18) and \$214 million (FY '19). After an all-out industry effort in those years, full

MSP funding was eventually authorized by Congress and the money was later appropriated. The FY '20 request, released this week, notes that the President “restored the Maritime Security Program fleet (MSP) to the full authorized 60 ship level” and stated that “restoring [the] MSP fleet to full authorized levels strengthens National Security and allows MARAD and the US Merchant Marine to meet its Department of Defense mission requirement.”

In his budget request, the President zeroed out a series of popular food aid programs that provide cargoes for U.S.-flag shipping including the USAID-administered PL-480 Food for Peace program. The proposal also zeroes out assistance to small shipyards as well as Title XI ship financing.

A President's budget request is only the first step in a months-long process of passing a budget for the Federal Government. Congress does not have to follow the President's budget request, though the White House recommendation traditionally has significant influence on the process. Congress now takes the lead as they begin to get down to work on detailed federal agency funding bills.

The AFL-CIO released a statement expressing disappointment that the President proposed \$2.7 trillion in funding cuts over the next decade “for vital domestic programs, including cuts to Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security and initiatives that provide essential basics like food, housing and health care for children, seniors and families in need.” AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka said that the Trump budget “does more harm than I can list....But his proposed cuts to Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid are among the worst. His plan is simple: Force us to get by with less, so corporations can hoard even more.”

### **NEED FOR MORE VIABLE U.S.-FLAG SHIPS HIGHLIGHTED AT JOINT CONGRESSIONAL SESSION**

At a Congressional hearing late last week, two Government agency leaders who coordinate U.S. sealift logistics stressed the need for additional U.S.-flagships to best respond to the national security challenges of tomorrow. The Commander of the U.S. Transportation Command General Steve Lyons and the nation's Maritime Administrator Rear Admiral Mark Buzby discussed the “State of the Mobility Enterprise during a joint House hearing overseen by the Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces (chaired by Rep. Joe Courtney) and the Subcommittee on Readiness (chaired by Rep. John Garamendi.

Gen. Lyons pointed out that the readiness of the surge sealift force is a top concern. “Today our sealift fleet is able to generate only 65% of the required capacity and is rapidly approaching end of useful life.” He said the need to recapitalize is “urgent.”

The nation relies on 46 Ready Reserve Force vessels along with 15 Military Sealift Command ships for the initial surge of sealift capacity. Currently, the RRF fleet has an average age of 44 years. Both Gen. Lyons and Rear Admiral Buzby confirmed that it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain the required readiness due to the continued erosion of the U.S.-flag fleet, the weakening abilities of the aging sealift vessels and the dwindling pool of qualified mariners. “I am deeply concerned about our ability to muster an adequate number of mariners to operate the sealift fleet needed for surge and sustainment operations during a mobilization lasting more than about 6 months,” the Maritime Administrator stated. Rear Admiral Buzby talked about the push to bring in newer vessels to replace the aging sealift fleet that demands escalating repair costs. A half dozen surge sealift vessels are “on the shelf” without Certificates of Inspection because of their dire need for repair, many of them with

deteriorated steel. However, he noted that under the most optimistic prediction, it would take 25-30 years to to “turn over” the aging RRF fleet to newer hulls.

The Seapower Subcommittee’s Ranking Member Rep. Rob Wittman (R-VA) said that his fear “is that we have allowed our logistics forces to become a seam issue, and our ability to project forces in a contested environment is becoming increasingly compromised.” But he criticized the notion of keeping RRF vessels on life support instead of seeking out new tonnage. “Why put more money into old ships that are right around the corner” from continued severe problems.

A Subcommittee member brought up the recent Presidential Executive Order that seeks to smooth the transition of active duty military members into the Merchant Marine. The Maritime Administrator was asked what can be done to increase the mariner pool. Rear Admiral Buzby praised the Executive Order but said that mariners can be brought in “but they have to have some place to work. If there’s not enough seagoing billets for them to participate, they’re not going to come in.”

He pointed out that a thousand new mariners come out of the maritime academies every year looking for work. “They’re not staying by and large...they’re not making a full career because there’s not a full career, in many cases, for them to have.” He said that we can bulk up our pool of qualified mariners by “giving them a place to work. “That means more ships under U.S.-flag. That’s how we’re going to get more merchant mariners quite frankly.”

As for existing mariners seeking to upgrade their licenses, the Maritime Administrator pointed out that, “the 82 oceangoing ships that we have now - plus the 99 Jones Act ships – [don’t] leave enough room for all of those people to continue to move forward and the rather onerous requirements that now are in place for licensing take up a lot of money and a lot of time. As young men and women get to the 7 to 10 [year] point in their careers where they’re getting ready to make that jump to the higher license levels – the more senior people that are going to be the Chief Engineers and Captains, they’re not seeing the upward mobility – there’s only so many places for them to go. And if they don’t see the growth, they’re going to do other things. So getting more ships under U.S.-flag is really kind of the key here.”

You can view the hearing online by visiting <http://tinyurl.com/y2dpydsv>

### **SEN. MIKE LEE WANTS FOREIGN SHIPPING INTERESTS TO TAKE U.S. JOBS**

Sen. Mike Lee, a Republican from land-locked Utah has put forth a bill to repeal the cabotage provisions of the Merchant Marine Act of 1920, better known as the Jones Act. His bill, S. 694, would surrender U.S. mariner jobs to foreign counterparts and wave the white flag on the U.S. Merchant Marine. The “Open America’s Waters Act of 2019,” takes up the mantle for recently deceased Sen. John McCain who introduced virtually identical bills in 2010 and 2017.

Pointing to estimates by the Cato Institute, Sen. Lee noted that, “Restricting trade between U.S. ports is a huge loss for American consumers and producers. It is long past time to repeal the Jones Act entirely so that Alaskans, Hawaiians, and Puerto Ricans aren’t forced to pay higher prices for imported goods—and so they rapidly receive the help they need in the wake of natural disasters.” The bill has been referred to the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

The bill parrots poorly thought-out criticisms leveled by misinformed Jones Act opponents and would obviously sacrifice a wealth of good American jobs. It would also represent a capitulation of our national security to foreign interests.

American Maritime Partnership President Matt Woodruff, said "...this legislation would do harm to the U.S. by outsourcing hundreds of thousands of American jobs, opening our coastal borders and undermining American national and homeland security. U.S. military and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officials have consistently made clear the importance of the Jones Act to the safeguarding of our nation."

Along with the blight on our U.S. flag fleet and American mariners stemming from a repeal, the negative implications on the nation's security would be inestimable. The U.S. Coast Guard and Customs are already overburdened with current enforcement requirements. A repeal would open the floodgates for foreign vessels and mariners on our coastlines and inner waterways necessitating a nightmare array of concerns that those agencies aren't equipped to contain.

Maritime Administrator Rear Admiral Mark Buzby consistently points out the need for the Jones Act. He noted, "Take away the Jones Act, you have taken away the majority of jobs for our U.S. mariners in peacetime, that we need in wartime. Getting rid of the Jones Act does not think through all of the ramifications it has on our war fighting ability..." At last week's Congressional hearing, reported on earlier in this issue, Rear Admiral Buzby stated, "without question, the Jones Act is absolutely foundational to our nation's ability to maintain a Merchant Marine in peacetime that will be there to serve this nation in time of crisis."

The M.E.B.A. legislative department, in alliance with maritime industry proponents, remain vigilant against attacks on U.S.-flag interests and will continue to fight against such incursions. M.E.B.A. members, retirees and applicants can help assist our battle to preserve U.S.-flag mariner jobs by supporting the M.E.B.A. Political Action Fund. Visit your local Union hall or use the M.E.B.A. website to make a contribution!

## **SIX-UNION MLA STRATEGY SESSION**

Leaders of the six-unions that make up the Maritime Labor Alliance met in Tampa, FL earlier this week to deliberate over a series of issues important to the coalition. The MLA is a cooperation between the ARA, IBU, ILA, ILWU, M.E.B.A. and the MM&P that fights to protect MLA member jurisdictions, working conditions and labor rights. M.E.B.A. was represented at the meeting by President Marshall Ainley, Secretary-Treasurer Bill Van Loo as well as Tampa Branch Agent Adam Smith and our Government Affairs Director Erick Siahaan.

Each of the affiliates gave a report at the meeting and a variety of current issues were thoroughly explored as the MLA works to focus its collective power for the betterment of working men and women in the maritime industry. Automation on the waterfront was an item of interest as well as tug crew fatigue on the Panama Canal. Funding for the Alaska Marine Highway System is a real concern affecting the viability of the ferry unit and MLA unions. M.E.B.A. contract discussions with several employers as well as ongoing issues was also a prominent item of discussion that MLA unions are following. Internal MLA organizational issues were also discussed including social media and outreach. MLA held its annual officer election and unanimously re-elected MM&P's Don Marcus as MLA President and M.E.B.A.'s Bill Van Loo as MLA Secretary-Treasurer.

## **M.E.B.A. JOINS TTD LEADERS IN CALLING FOR INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT**

As part of AFL-CIO's Transportation Trades Department (TTD), M.E.B.A. joined Executive Committee leaders in calling for improved workplace safety and strengthening America's transportation network. M.E.B.A. is a founding member of the TTD which represents 32 unions in the maritime, aviation, rail, transit, trucking, highway, longshore, and related industries. TTD met this week in New Orleans with President Marshall Ainley, Secretary-Treasurer Bill Van Loo and Government Affairs Director Erick Siahaan representing the M.E.B.A.

“Our economy cannot function without a safe, efficient transportation network, and that network cannot operate without a dedicated workforce,” said TTD president Larry Willis. “The policies we fight for today will strengthen our economy, empower frontline transportation workers, and ensure this industry remains a source of good, middle-class jobs now and in the future.”

Members of TTD's Executive Committee discussed their agenda, and goals for the new Congress, with Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Peter DeFazio (D-OR), who has signaled a desire to pass a robust infrastructure investment bill this year. Executive Committee members also met with National Transportation Safety Board member Jennifer Homendy to discuss ways they can work together to improve transportation safety for workers and the traveling public.

During the meeting, union presidents examined ways to increase spending in our transportation network, improve rail safety, and mitigate fatigue among commercial drivers. There was a robust discussion in support of the Jones Act, and transportation labor leaders called for the FAA and TSA to be protected from any future government shutdowns. They also vowed to implement safety and worker-focused mandates found in the most recent FAA bill. Labor leaders also rolled out an eight-point plan designed to protect the jobs of transit workers from threats of automation and reinforced transportation labor's role in ending human trafficking.

## **OCEAN GIANT CONCLUDES OPERATION DEEP FREEZE; COAST GUARD ICEBREAKER LIMPS HOME**

The Waterman Steamship-managed heavy lift vessel OCEAN GIANT successfully completed cargo offload operations in Port Hueneme, CA last week bringing its starring role in the Military Sealift Command's Operation Deep Freeze to a close. Deep Freeze is an annual resupply mission to scientists at the South Pole's McMurdo Station. The ship offloaded 450 containers of retrograde at Port Hueneme, including station waste and recyclables, as well as ice-core samples for scientific study.

Also concluding its service in the operation was the Coast Guard's only heavy icebreaker, the cutter POLAR STAR. Though the 43-year old vessel performed herculean work escorting the OCEAN GIANT and breaking through 16.5 nautical miles of ice, six to ten feet thick, at McMurdo, their mission was not without travails.

During the visit, one of the ship's electrical systems began to overheat causing damage to wiring in an electrical switchboard, and one of the vessel's two evaporators used to make drinkable water failed. The electrical switchboard was repaired by the crew, and the ship's evaporator was repaired after parts were received during a port call in Wellington, New Zealand.

The impact from ice operations ruptured the cutter's centerline shaft seal, allowing water to flood into the ship. Ice breaking operations ceased so embarked Coast Guard and Navy Divers could enter the

water to apply a patch outside the hull so POLAR STAR's engineers could repair the seal from inside the ship. The engineers donned dry suits and diver's gloves to enter the 30-degree water of the still slowly flooding bilge to effect the vital repairs. They used special tools fabricated onboard to fix the leaking shaft seal and resume ice breaking operations.

The POLAR STAR also experienced ship-wide power outages while breaking ice in McMurdo Sound. Crew members spent nine hours shutting down the ship's power plant and re-energizing the electrical system in order to remedy the outages.

Then on Feb. 10, the crew spent nearly two hours extinguishing a fire in the ship's incinerator room while the ship was approximately 650-nautical-miles north of McMurdo Sound. The fire damaged the incinerator and some electrical wiring in the room was damaged by fire fighting water. There were no personnel injuries or damage to equipment outside the space. Repairs to the incinerator are already scheduled for POLAR STAR's upcoming in-port maintenance period.

Commissioned in 1976, the cutter is operating beyond its expected 30-year service life. It is scheduled for a service life extension project starting in 2021. In the fiscal year 2019 budget, Congress appropriated \$655 million to begin construction of a new polar security cutter this year, with another \$20 million appropriated for long-lead-time materials to build a second.

#### **REGULAR MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS**

Monday, April 8 – **Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300;**

Tuesday, April 9 – **CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;**

Wednesday, April 10 – **Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;**

Thursday, April 11 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;**

Friday, April 12 – **Honolulu@1100.**

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*The M.E.B.A. is the nation's oldest maritime labor union, established in 1875. M.E.B.A.'s expertise and proven track record of readiness, safety, and loyalty in answering America's call to action in times of both peace and war is unrivaled in the world. M.E.B.A. HQ – Phone: (202) 638-5355; [mebahq@mebaunion.org](mailto:mebahq@mebaunion.org). Visit us on Facebook. For publication and related inquiries contact Marco Cannistraro, M.E.B.A. Special Projects & Communications – [marco@mebaunion.org](mailto:marco@mebaunion.org)*