

# MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

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



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

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### **CONGRESS CONTINUES WORK ON LEGISLATION WITH MARITIME-RELATED PROVISIONS**

Amid the impeachment inquiry and a full load of government funding bills and other important business, the M.E.B.A. is tracking several legislative items that Congress should address in the coming weeks.

The House and Senate conferees are in the process of reconciling their legislative differences in each chamber's version of the Fiscal Year 2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), a bill to authorize a number of defense programs. Importantly, both versions include the reauthorization of the Maritime Security Program (MSP) through Fiscal Year 2035. The House and Senate bills also address an upcoming MSP funding shortfall that would begin in FY '22 in the absence of Congressional action.

Less certain to survive the conferenced-out version of the final bill is a House provision – not mirrored in the Senate bill – that would authorize an Oil Tanker Security Program. The new program would create a 10-ship U.S.-flag commercial petroleum tanker vessel fleet and operate similarly to the Maritime Security Program with stipends provided by the Department of Defense. The vessels would support the needs of our military while drawing on a pool of qualified U.S. mariners.

In addition, maritime interests are closely watching the Coast Guard Reauthorization bill, which contains a number of important provisions affecting mariners. The full House of Representatives has already approved a bill while a comparable version is still winding its way through the Senate. One provision in the House version involves a requirement for a Government cargo preference study. Specifically, the provision would require an audit by the non-partisan Government Accountability Office (GAO) of the federal agencies which are obligated to comply with cargo preference requirements. The GAO audit would analyze agency compliance (or non-compliance) and detail, by agency, the percentage of cargo shipped on U.S. flag vessels. Once the Senate acts on their version of the Coast Guard bill, it will head to a conference committee, where differences with the House will be negotiated and voted upon prior to the President's signature.

Congress must also address a series of appropriation bills by November 21 to fully fund critical programs and avoid another government shutdown. In late September, as the previous deadline

approached, President Trump signed a continuing resolution extending current funding levels for the Federal government until November 21.

As always, the M.E.B.A. is monitoring developments and working closely with our political allies from both parties to ensure the progress of legislative priorities.

### **HOUSE COMMITTEE TO TAKE UP WORK ON EX-IM BANK RE-CHARTER**

The short-term spending bill signed by the President to fund the Government delayed the expiration of the Export-Import Bank's charter until November 21<sup>st</sup>. But Members of Congress hope to move a bill next week to authorize the Bank into the future. The House Financial Services Committee has scheduled a mark-up next Tuesday of a bill that would renew Bank operations for another seven years. The Bank's re-chartering is subject to Congressional approval.

The Ex-Im Bank is a key source of cargo for U.S.-flag shipping and enjoys strong bipartisan support. However, several conservative lawmakers oppose the continuation of Bank operations as they consider it to be a form of "corporate welfare" that picks "winners and losers." The House bill would re-charter the Bank, increase the Bank's exposure cap and would implement a series of reforms that may serve to appease Bank critics.

The Ex-Im Bank helps U.S. companies finance the export of U.S. goods and services to international markets. Importantly, a portion of cargo generated by the Bank is required to be transported aboard U.S.-flag ships. In addition, for transactions above \$20 million, 100% of all cargo financed by the Bank must be carried on US-flag vessels. Ex-Im Bank helps create jobs in this country and turns a profit at no cost to taxpayers.

### **YOUR SUPPORT CAN HELP PROPEL CHANCES FOR PRO-U.S.-FLAG SHIPPING BILL**

U.S.-shipping interests are seeking positive momentum for bipartisan legislation that looks to dramatically increase the size of the U.S.-flag fleet. The Energizing American Shipbuilding Act (H.R. 3829/S. 2167), introduced in both the House and Senate, would require that fixed percentages of all exported LNG and crude oil would travel on U.S.-built, crewed, and flagged vessels. If enacted, the proposal could help grow the U.S.-flag fleet and support thousands of new jobs for American mariners, shipyards, and the domestic maritime industry.

Congressman John Garamendi (D-CA) sponsored the bill in the House and Senator Roger Wicker (R-MI) took the lead on the comparable version in the Senate. There hasn't been much progress since the bills were re-introduced in July. The bill was first introduced in 2016, but the current version has been manicured since then to ease in changes more gradually and better improve its Congressional chances.

Co-sponsors to support the respective House and Senate legislation are being sought to increase its prospects of passage. You can help convince your lawmakers to both support the legislation and sign on as a co-sponsor by visiting this Navy League link that makes it easy to send a letter to the halls of Congress: [www.votervoice.net/NavyLeague/Campaigns/67622/Respond](http://www.votervoice.net/NavyLeague/Campaigns/67622/Respond)

Once you enter your name and zip code, the Navy League site will help you send a customizable ready-made letter supporting the cause to your Senators and House Member(s). It'll take less than two minutes. Your elected representatives need to hear from you!

## **GREEN LAKE SET TO RECEIVE GALLANT SHIP AWARD, AOTOS HONOR**

The M.E.B.A.-crewed Pure Car/Truck Carrier GREEN LAKE will receive the prestigious Department of Transportation Gallant Ship Award on November 1<sup>st</sup> in a ceremony that will take place in New York City. The GREEN LAKE's crew, made up of M.E.B.A., MM&P and SIU mariners, will also be presented with medals for their part in the dramatic rescue of crewmembers from a Japanese car carrier that exploded into flames near Wake Island on December 31<sup>st</sup>.

The Gallant Ship Award is presented by the Department of Transportation to a vessel that is part of an "outstanding or gallant action in a marine disaster or other emergency to save life or property at sea." This is only the 42<sup>nd</sup> Gallant Ship Award to be presented since 1942 and the first since 1994. Maritime Administrator Mark Buzby is scheduled to award the accolades to ship and crew.

Waterman Transport Inc. (formerly Central Gulf) manages the vessel which is enrolled in the Maritime Security Program. M.E.B.A. officers onboard the vessel during the incident included C/E Joseph Tierney, 1<sup>st</sup> A/E Shauna Glasser, 2<sup>nd</sup> A/E Thomas Pollock and 3<sup>rd</sup> A/E Maria Asuncion.

Later that evening, the GREEN LAKE will also be honored with special recognition from the United Seamen's Service (USS) at the annual Admiral of the Ocean Sea (AOTOS) awards.

The USNS BRUNSWICK, a Military Sealift Command (MSC) Expeditionary Fast Transport vessel with M.E.B.A. engineers aboard, is also among a handful of vessels being singled out for AOTOS honors that night. The honor for the BRUNSWICK crew centers around their participation in the massive multi-nation humanitarian aid and disaster response operation called Pacific Partnership 2019.

## **WSF MOVES AHEAD ON 3 VESSEL HYBRID ELECTRIC CONVERSION**

Washington State Ferries is moving forward with converting its three Jumbo Mark II class ferries, the largest in the fleet, from diesel to hybrid electric propulsion. Last month, WSF selected Siemens to complete the propulsion system upgrade design for the three Jumbo Mark II Class vessels. The vessel conversion design will begin this month. Planning and design will continue through 2020 and construction will begin in 2021.

"Converting the biggest, dirtiest ferries in the fleet is a huge milestone in our efforts to decarbonize the state and fulfill our obligation to help defeat climate change," said Washington State Governor Jay Inslee. "In addition to reducing emissions, moving to an all-electric ferry fleet will save taxpayers money on ferry operating costs, virtually eliminate engine noise and vibration that can hurt orca whales, and improve reliability of service."

In addition to cost savings and reduced maintenance costs, the State says that converting the Jumbo Mark IIs will reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 48,565 metric tons per year. They noted that hybrid ferries will also cut the emissions of nitrogen oxide by 184.5 metric tons per year once all three ferries are operating with hybrid electric propulsion. The ferries carry 202 cars and 1800 passengers each and primarily operate on the Seattle/Bainbridge and Edmonds/Kingston routes.

## **CHICAGO SCHOOL SYSTEM EMPLOYEES KEEP UP THE FIGHT**

Incremental progress is being made at the bargaining table on a series of minor issues affecting Chicago educators, but a host of major concerns have not yet been resolved. School is out for the

sixth day while more than 30,000 Chicago school system employees represented by the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) and SEIU Local 73 fight to win respect and normalize school conditions.

CTU represents about 25,000 educators, paraprofessionals and clinicians. SEIU Local 73 represents about 7,000 special education classroom assistants, bus aides, custodians and school security officers. Striking workers are looking for better pay and benefits, smaller class sizes and full staffing, among other provisions.

CTU announced that their negotiators have 80 tentative agreements on issues that are “not sexy” – that “involve minutiae of teaching that only particular members will appreciate in relation to their own work lives.” However, Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot has not been helpful in making headway on the major problems that plague the Chicago school system such as class size and staffing. SEIU Local 73 has been frustrated in their talks which lasted all of 12 minutes yesterday after the Mayor’s team failed to participate in a constructive fashion and then walked out. SEIU says that public school staff has been working without a contract since June 30, 2018. The Mayor has admitted that the employees represented by SEIU 73 are “chronically underpaid” and the school system employs some of the lowest-paid workers in the city.

Dian Palmer, President of SEIU Local 73, said “Mayor Lightfoot it’s your decision. You are the Mayor of this city. You are the one who can settle this contract, all you have to do is direct your team to make Special Education Classroom Assistants, custodians, bus aides, security officers, and everyone else that works in the schools a priority.”

#### **REMINDER: EXTENDED HOURS AT JAX HALL**

As a reminder, the Jacksonville hall is keeping its doors open a little later on a trial basis. Following member input, M.E.B.A.’s District Executive Committee extended the operating hours at the hall for two months and will consider changing the hours on a permanent basis if justified.

Since October 1<sup>st</sup> and continuing until Friday, November 29, 2019, the hall is operating between 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. each working day.

#### **NVIC CHANGES ANNOUNCED**

Changes to Navigation and Vessel Inspection Circulars: 04-14, 08-14, 09-14, 12-14, and 14-14 The Coast Guard’s Office of Merchant Mariner Credentialing published changes to five Navigation and Vessel Inspection Circulars (NVICs) concerning qualification for certain Merchant Mariner Credential STCW endorsements.

- As previously announced Sept. 20, 2019, NVICs 04-14, 08-14, and 09-14 were revised to provide guidance on renewal of STCW endorsements for Proficiency in Survival Craft, Proficiency in Survival Craft-Limited, Basic Training, and Advanced Firefighting for mariners serving on vessels in a reduced operating status and on other vessels in operation that do not get underway.
- NVIC 12-14 (Officer in Charge of a Navigational Watch 500 Gross Tons or More) was revised to remove grandfathering provisions that expired on January 1, 2017, and to add an explanation of the requirement in 46 CFR 11.201(a) to hold an appropriate national endorsement in order to qualify for an STCW endorsement.

- NVIC 14-14 (Able Seafarer-Deck) was revised to allow assessments of competence to be performed in locations other than a ship when the use of shipboard equipment is not needed for the assessment, and to add greater flexibility as to how the assessment may be performed.

Visit the Coast Guard's NVIC webpage to view the revised NVICs. For information about these NVICs or to suggest changes, contact the Mariner Credentialing Program Policy Division (CG-MMC-2) at (202) 372-2357 or [MMCPolicy@uscg.mil](mailto:MMCPolicy@uscg.mil).

### **REGULAR MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS**

Monday, November 4 – Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300;

Tuesday, November 5 – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;

Wednesday, November 6 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;

Thursday, November 7 – L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;

Friday, November 8 – 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) Visit us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and check us out on Instagram.*