

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)



"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"

M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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FAVORITE FOR NEXT WASHINGTON STATE GOVERNOR LOOKING TO REVITALIZE WSF

The leading Democratic contender for the State of Washington's gubernatorial race is throwing his weight behind a Republican-backed initiative aimed at expediting ferry construction while slowing down the state's push towards electrification. Attorney General Bob Ferguson, the favorite to succeed outgoing Governor Jay Inslee, has voiced support for the immediate construction of two diesel-powered vessels, citing the urgent need to bolster ferry reliability amid frequent cancellations due to breakdowns and lack of mariners.

Ferguson's proposal, unveiled this week, comes as a response to the myriad challenges facing Washington State Ferries, the largest public ferry system in the United States. His plan includes advocating for the elevation of the ferry head to a cabinet-level position, alongside the secretary of transportation, and increasing the use of passenger-only ferries as a short-term, bridge solution. He is calling for the implementation of strategies to address labor shortages such as easing credentialing costs for mariners and undergoing "a wage and benefit survey that includes comparisons of all relevant employers, such as commercial shipping operations, that are in competition for the same maritime workers, to keep wages and benefits competitive" - a proposal supported by the M.E.B.A.

His endorsement of diesel ferries has drawn the most attention. This stance aligns Ferguson with Republicans, who proposed similar measures in previous sessions, but pits him against Governor Jay Inslee and Democratic lawmakers who have set ambitious targets for achieving an emission-free ferry fleet by 2050. Ferguson maintains that while the ultimate goal remains electrification, urgent action is needed to address the immediate crisis faced by island residents who rely on ferries for transportation.

Meanwhile, Ferguson suggests that bids can still be solicited for hybrid-electric boats, while he advocates for increased use of passenger-only ferries until new vessels are operational. However, some Republicans have criticized Ferguson for what they see as a belated engagement with the issue, accusing him of adopting their ideas for political expediency.

\$316 MILLION EARMARKED FOR FERRY MODERNIZATION

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) announced that \$316 million is being made available through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) to support and modernize passenger ferry service in communities across the country. The BIL established more federal support for ferry service, including for ferry systems transitioning to climate-friendly technologies and ferry service expansion in rural areas. FTA released a Notice of Funding Opportunity for ferry services to apply for grant money.

Past grants have helped transit authorities upgrade ferry service across the country, from Alaska to Maine, to Georgia and California. Last year, FTA announced \$220.2 million in project selections through its ferry programs. Ferry systems around the country, including the Alaska Marine Highway System, Golden Gate Ferry, Staten Island Ferries, and Washington State Ferries received significant grant money in the past year.

M.E.B.A. TAKES PART IN MARINER WORK-LIFE BALANCE SYMPOSIUM

M.E.B.A. officials participated in a Department of Transportation symposium this week examining the intricacies of the work-life balance experienced by mariners. The U.S. Maritime Administration (MarAd) along with the U.S. Committee on the Marine Transportation System sponsored the symposium that offered a rich tapestry of panel discussions and breakout sessions featuring a diverse array of industry stalwarts, esteemed academics and seasoned mariners. M.E.B.A. President Adam Vokac and Executive V.P. Claudia Cimini represented the Union and both took part in panel discussions. Topics of discourse included mariner career progression, training paradigms, attrition factors, onboard lifestyle dynamics, mariner mental well-being, and lack of differential for seagoing jobs versus shoreside work.

Panel discussions also highlighted how mariners grapple with the demanding nature of the business - marked by extended periods in confined, hazardous, and noisy conditions, along with prolonged separations from home - underscoring the need for sustainable work-life structures tailored to their distinct situations.

FRC COMPLETES REVIEW, FORWARDS REPORT

A six-person rank-and-file Financial Review Committee spent three days at M.E.B.A. Headquarters this week scrutinizing the Union's financial records for calendar year 2023. The FRC was created as a Democratic safeguard adopted by the M.E.B.A. in the mid-1990s to examine the Union's finances from the previous year.

This year, the Committee was made up of the following six members: Steven Walker (Seattle) who served as Chairman, Scott Adler (NY/NJ), Cameron Bourque (Tampa), Bryan Higgins (Norfolk), Daniel Barcon-Earle (Oakland) and Jim Moore (Houston).

The FRC members signed off on a report that will be made available at the halls and voted upon by members at the regular May membership meetings. Many thanks for their hard work this week and for participating in this important democratic process.

USTR WILL PROBE POSSIBLE UNFAIR CHINESE SHIPBUILDING

In response to a United Steelworkers petition supported by the M.E.B.A., the office of the United States Trade Representative has agreed to open up an investigation over concerns of unjust Chinese shipbuilding practices.

M.E.B.A., as part of the AFL-CIO's Maritime Trades Department, joined the USW petition alleging that China engaged in anti-competitive shipbuilding practices that not only disadvantage American workers but also pose a significant threat to national security.

The USTR announced the investigation and will hold a public hearing and seek comment in connection with this investigation. For further information contact Megan Grimball and Philip Butler, Chairs of the Section 301 Committee, or Assistant General Counsels Thomas Au and Henry Smith, (202) 395-5725.

CMES GETS CG APPROVAL FOR TWO REQUIRED FUEL TRANSFERS IN ADVANCED IGF COURSE

The Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School announced that it has received additional Coast Guard approvals for its Combined Basic & Advanced IGF Code Operations course that will provide even greater impact for the M.E.B.A. membership. Thanks to the new approvals, students taking the class, which is better known as "LNG as a Fuel," can satisfy requirements for two of the three fuel transfers needed within the confines of the course, instead of onboard ship, using the simulator at the Calhoun School.

Specifically, the course will now partially satisfy the Fuel Transfer requirements contained in CG-MMC Policy Letter 01-21, Enclosure (2) Paragraph (2)(b)(1) and Enclosure (2) Paragraph (5) giving credit for two Fuel Transfers. The approvals affect LNG as a Fuel classes going forward - past courses are not grandfathered.

These approvals represent great news for the CMES which continues to provide enhanced, immersive training to our mariners propelling them to the forefront of ship system expertise and allowing them to deliver unparalleled value to our contracted companies.

CMES GEARING UP FOR CADET INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School will host up to 80 next-generation mariners this summer for its wildly popular Licensed Cadet Internship program set to take place from July 8-26. The annual program enables bright young maritime academy cadets from around the country to get a head start on their shipping careers by absorbing valuable knowledge and much-needed skills in a highly-professional, enjoyable learning environment. Cadets can take part in the program without making a commitment to the Union, but while they attend, they will learn more about the excellent career opportunities that the M.E.B.A. presents.

Though program principals are still finalizing details of the three-week summer curriculum, participants will take advantage of a series of training courses that may include LNG as a Fuel, the MSC CONMAR package, High Voltage Safety and truncated versions of Diesel Engineering, Welding and Machine Shop, among other offerings.

Members are urged to direct interested cadets in their Junior or Senior year to contact the CMES. Recent graduates are also encouraged to contact the School regarding the program.

SPACE AVAILABLE IN MAY ELECTRICAL TROUBLESHOOTING COURSE

The Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School announced that it has additional space available in the My 13-24 installment of its two-week Practical Electrical Troubleshooting course.

The course helps engineers improve their ability to troubleshoot onboard electrical systems. It provides a review of electrical fundamentals and laws and covers how to read prints with emphasis on expected readings in any part of a circuit, proper use of basic test equipment, components, circuit protective devices, sensors, motor controllers, basics of PLCs and VFDs. Safety topics include available energy levels and PPE. The course is presented as formal lectures and some student labs.

Applications can be sent via the CMES website (www.mebaschool.org), by fax (410) 822-7220, or by email to applications@mebaschool.org

SEN. STABENOW RECOGNIZED FOR GREAT LAKES SUPPORT

During the Congressional Maritime Sail-In last Wednesday, the Great Lakes Maritime Task Force (GLMTF) recognized the significant contributions of Michigan Senator Debbie Stabenow to U.S.-flag shipping on the Lakes. The presentation of the award was made at Senator Stabenow's Washington D.C. office surrounded by many grateful Great Lakes Maritime Task Force members. The group presented the Senator with a ship model of the Interlake Steamship vessel PAUL R. TREGURTHA in thanks for her leadership.

Senator Stabenow has been a critical champion for one of the most important North American infrastructure projects in several years with the construction of a large new U.S. Army Corps of Engineers navigational lock in Sault Ste Marie, Michigan. She has tirelessly advocated for funding authorization and continued efficient funding of the estimated \$3.2 billion mega project securing large annual appropriations to keep the project on track.

MEMBERS URGED TO STAY CURRENT

Members are strongly urged to ensure their dues status is secured through the end of the year to guarantee their participation in important Union business. Only members in good standing are permitted a voice at the monthly membership meetings. The By-Laws state that no member shall be entitled to any benefits of the Union or be considered in good standing unless his or her dues are paid in full for the current calendar quarter or paid in accordance with the dues check-off (DCO) system. In addition, when members who pay by DCO take vacation or (in the case of the Government fleet) Leave without Pay (LWOP), there are lapses in payroll where dues aren't automatically submitted.

M.E.B.A.'s online Member Payment and Update Portal (PUP) allows the membership the ease of making online monetary transactions and gives them the opportunity to verify their credentials and contact information on file, as well as submitted sea time. Members and applicants can use the Member PUP to pay their dues or service charges by credit card, debit card or through their

checking account. They can also set up a recurring payment schedule to automatically keep them current. The site also allows users to view their transaction history online in a secure manner.

Visit www.mebaunion.org where you can click on the Member PUP banner to get started. In addition, the PUP allows members, applicants and retirees to make contributions to the M.E.B.A.'s Good & Welfare and Political Action Funds that support so many members. Contributions to the Good & Welfare Fund are tax deductible. This fund has provided essential assistance to members and retirees in their time of need. The PAF keeps M.E.B.A. jobs afloat by affording us a crucial lifeline to policymakers who help determine the fate of the U.S. Merchant Marine.

You'll find the online Portal to be the most efficient and advantageous manner to remain in good standing and extend a needed monetary infusion to vital Union programs.

MAKE SURE YOUR LATEST CONTACT INFO IS ON FILE!!!

The membership should make sure that M.E.B.A. Headquarters has your contact information on file including mailing and email address. If you haven't filled out an M.E.B.A. Database Update Form – or if your information has changed – grab the form off the M.E.B.A. website (www.mebaunion.org) located in the “Documents & Member Notices” section. Update Forms should be sent to the HQ Membership Dept. by e-mail membership@mebaunion.org or even regular mail.

The HQ database is NOT LINKED to the databases at the M.E.B.A. Plans office in Baltimore OR the Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School. To update your information with Plans, you can find the “M.E.B.A. Address Change Form” on the Plans website (www.mebaplans.org) under “Forms, Documents & Notices” then “Medical Plan Forms.”

NEXT MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS *(All times are local)*

Monday, May 6 – **Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300.**

Tuesday, May 7 – **CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230.**

Wednesday, May 8 – **Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online HQ “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing mebahq@mebaunion.org**

Thursday, May 9 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.**

Friday, May 10 – **Honolulu@1100**

-----FINISHED WITH ENGINES-----



***M.E.B.A. does not tolerate assault, or harassment of any kind.
If you see something, say something – The M.E.B.A. Emergency Hotline
can be reached at 1-888-519-0018.***

The M.E.B.A. is the nation's oldest maritime labor union, established in 1875. M.E.B.A.'s expertise and demonstrated 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. For publication and related inquiries (and to send photos & hot news tips) contact Marco Cannistraro, M.E.B.A. Special Projects & Communications – marco@mebaunion.org Visit us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and check us out on Instagram.