

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 – Jones Act Waiver Hurts U.S.-Flag Shipping//Portland, Maine Hall Names Opening Day//Small Arms Course Combined with SWA//Gas Turbine Classes Canceled Due to Partial Shutdown//More Space in Upcoming Tankship LNG Course//Sailors' Snug Harbor Open to Retired Mariners//

JONES ACT WAIVER IS SAPPING AMERICAN SHIPPING STRENGTH

The M.E.B.A., among many in the American maritime industry are sharply criticizing the administration's decision to further extend the Jones Act waiver that is currently in effect, warning that the move undermines confidence in the long-term stability of U.S.-flag shipping. Maritime leaders argue that broad waivers discourage investment in American vessels, weaken the business case for maintaining U.S.-flag operations, erode shipyard demand and send the wrong signal to mariners considering careers at sea.

The unprecedented 90-day extension that will begin following the expiration of the current 60-day waiver on May 17 is being viewed as a giveaway to foreign shipping interests while producing no measurable benefit for American consumers. U.S. shipping interests contend that the waiver allows foreign-flag operators to capture cargoes that would otherwise support U.S.-flag vessels, American crews and domestic maritime infrastructure. Policymakers are urged to return to the longstanding practice of narrowly tailored, case-by-case waivers rather than relying on an overly broad exemption.

Across the maritime sector, critics have repeatedly argued that the waiver fails both economically and strategically. They note that gasoline prices have remained elevated since the original waiver took effect and point out that global crude markets, not domestic shipping regulations, are the primary force driving fuel costs. Though the Trump administration called for a revitalization of American shipbuilding and a fortified U.S.-flag fleet, the waivers are a step in the wrong direction. M.E.B.A. President Adam Vokac noted, "Extending this waiver does not advance an America First agenda. It simply hands a competitive advantage to foreign shipping companies and allows them to profit directly at the expense of the U.S. Merchant Marine and the tens of thousands of hardworking Americans who crew these vessels."

Industry groups also warn that repeated Jones Act waivers create long-term damage beyond the immediate energy market. One anti-Jones Act coalition made up of retailer and agricultural interests, reveled in the waivers that allows foreign interests free reign for almost half the year. They noted, "The President's emergency waiver confirms what our members have long known: this law, as written, is not working for the American economy. It is time to put this issue front and center and take an earnest approach to reform. We stand ready to work with Congress on a bipartisan basis to modernize the Jones Act and build a maritime policy that strengthens America's supply chains."

Maritime advocates say that cargo preference and coastwise protections are essential to sustaining the privately owned U.S.-flag fleet that supports both domestic commerce and national defense sealift capabilities. Every cargo shifted to foreign operators, they say, represents lost work for American mariners, fewer opportunities for U.S. shipyards and another step toward further shrinking the nation's already limited commercial fleet.

The Great Lakes Maritime Task Force stated that, "One American tanker company lost a charter for the movement of a covered commodity immediately after the extension was announced. Another company has said that they are withholding any decisions to build new tankers for the Jones Act trades due to the extension. Yet another company is withholding significant investments into a U.S. shipyard because of the investment uncertainty created by the waivers. Already voyages that could have been completed by an American company instead are going to foreign-flag operators benefiting from the windfall from the waiver. The American industry is being compromised by the uncertainty caused by the waiver, which makes the U.S. less secure. Countries that refuse to support American war efforts are taking American jobs and profiting from it."

The leaders of all six State Maritime Academies jointly sent a letter to the Department of Transportation decrying the waivers. They noted, "A waiver of this length and breadth, for 150 days, creates massive uncertainty and confusion for students and prospective students considering a career in the American maritime industry. By outsourcing U.S. mariner jobs to foreign mariners, this waiver is completely contrary to efforts to revitalize the American maritime industry. This waiver will undermine your efforts to address the national mariner shortage."

Mariners can express their disapproval of the waivers by visiting [this link](#) – from One Click Politics. You can also be directed there by putting "Use Your Voice" and "Jones Act" into a search engine. The link will bring you to a customizable letter that will allow you to let your Member of Congress know that it is not acceptable to give away the U.S.-flag fleet to foreign interests.

OPENING DAY FOR PORTLAND, MAINE UNION HALL IS MAY 11

The M.E.B.A.'s new Union hall in Portland, Maine will begin operations on May 11, 2026 after a week to be spent on readying the hall for members. M.E.B.A. retiree Bill Duffy will serve as the Representative at the new location at 2 Portland Fish Pier, Suite #302 in Portland. The phone number will be (207) 813-4091. Representative Duffy can be emailed at bduffy@mebaunion.org. The hall will be open each weekday from 1100 to 1700.

The M.E.B.A.'s District Executive Committee is interested in better serving the large concentration of New England-based members in our Union. In addition to providing day-to-day operations for nearby members, the hall will also provide a vantage point to enhance recruitment efforts at Maine Maritime Academy.

SMALL ARMS COURSE EXPANDS TO FIVE DAYS

Due to a change in Military Sealift Command regulations, it is now required for students to take the Security Watchstander Advanced (SWA) course along with the Small Arms course at the Calhoon M.E.B.A. Engineering School.

As such, SWA will no longer be an optional addition to the Small Arms course but a required one. Students should expect to be in class all day on the Friday of the course. Upon successful completion, students will receive two course completion certificates, one for Small Arms and another for SWA.

The CMES will continue to offer Security Watchstander Basic in the evenings of Small Arms for any students who need it. The May 4 Small Arms class is subject to the change and the Registrar has notified those students who are enrolled.

GAS TURBINE ENGINEERING COURSES CANCELED

The Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School must cancel the remainder of the Gas Turbine Engineering courses for 2026. Due to multiple government shutdowns and reduced staffing issues, the USCG's National Maritime Center (NMC) is extremely far behind in course approvals.

Temporarily, until the CMES has received course approval from the National Maritime Center, Gas Turbine training will be approved for alternate location reimbursement for members needing the training for employment.

CMES will add new courses and open up enrollments as soon as all the required approvals are issued from the NMC.

ADDITIONAL SPACE IN UPCOMING TANKSHIP LNG COURSE

The Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School announced that it has additional space available in its two-week May 11-22, 2026 Tankship LNG class.

Applications can be sent via the CMES website (www.mebaschool.org) or emailed to applications@mebaschool.org

SAILORS' SNUG HARBOR LOOKING FOR RETIRED MERCHANT MARINERS THAT CAN USE HELP

The Trustees of the Sailors' Snug Harbor in the City of New York (SSH), one of the oldest secular charities in the United States, continues to help retired career mariners in financial need. They no longer operate a retirement home for mariners, but instead help mariners across the country in their home communities. SSH helps mariners live more comfortably by assisting them with their living expenses as well as helping them find other assistance and local services.

SSH was incorporated in 1806 as the result of a bequest made by Captain Robert Richard Randall. Not much is known about Captain Randall. He spent much of his life managing the family shipping company. By far his most famous deed — and the one by which he is remembered today — occurred on June 1, 1801, when he signed his Will. It is rumored that Alexander Hamilton helped Capt. Randall create his Will days before his death. Captain Randall dictated that The Sailors' Snug Harbor be created and maintained in perpetuity to support aged sailors.

In 1833, SSH opened their first retirement home in Staten Island, NY. At its peak in the beginning of the twentieth century, more than 1,000 sailors were in residence together at the facility. The decades following, enrollment declined while costs to maintain the historic buildings to current codes rose. The facility was closed in 1976 and 105 mariners residing at the facility moved to SSH's newly built facility in Sea Level, NC.

SSH realized the majority of retired mariners in need of assistance did not want to move to Staten Island or Sea Level, but would rather stay in their home communities with their spouses, families and friends. In the early 1990s, SSH started to assist mariners in their home communities and gradually moved away from operating a retirement home. In 2005, the Sea Level home was sold.

Today SSH helps mariners across the country. In 2015, SSH lowered its seetime requirement from 3,650 days at sea, to 2,555 days at sea and will now accept inland seetime to help meet this lowered requirement. Other requirements of the program are that the mariner must be a U.S. citizen and 60 years of age or older. Younger mariners may apply if they are disabled. The last requirement is that an applicant must be able to show a need for financial assistance. Applicants with over \$75,000 in savings will not be eligible.

The SSH website, www.thesailorssnugharbor.org, has a link to the program's application. If you are interested in learning more about SSH, please contact: The Trustees of the Sailors' Snug Harbor in the City of New York; Toll Free: 1-888-257-5456 or 646-465-8585; info@thesailorssnugharbor.org

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

Monday, May 4 – **Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300.**

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

Wednesday, May 6 – **Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online HQ “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing mebahq@mebaunion.org**

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

Friday, May 8 – **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. Website: www.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. The Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School can be contacted at (410) 822-9600 or www.mebaschool.org. M.E.B.A. Plans is at (410) 547-9111 or www.mebaplans.org