

# MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

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



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

*The Official Union Newsletter – "The Word to the Wise"*

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### **TRANSPORTATION LEADERS CALL FOR EXPANSION OF JONES ACT FLEET**

Over 30 transportation labor organizations, including the M.E.B.A., met in Washington D.C. this week and unanimously urged the administration to expand our U.S.-flag domestic shipping fleet. At the bi-annual Transportation Trades Dept. (AFL-CIO) legislative summit, labor leaders formally called on Congress and the Biden Administration to continue enacting policies to improve the domestic supply chain, increase safety, and uplift working people.

M.E.B.A. is a founding member of the TTD which represents 37 unions in the maritime, aviation, rail, transit, trucking, highway, longshore, and related industries.

M.E.B.A. Secretary-Treasurer Roland Rexha represented the Union at the summit and discussed our priorities with labor leaders and attendees including AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler, White House Infrastructure Coordinator Mitch Landrieu, Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Rep. Don Bacon (R-NE). At the meeting, the coalition honored Senator Brown with the inaugural "Larry Willis Leadership Award," in recognition of his demonstrated commitment to improving the safety, working conditions, and livelihoods of transportation workers.

Transportation leaders noted that the disruptions caused by COVID and the Ukraine crisis is a stark reminder that the U.S. "should be in control of our commercial goods, energy production, and cargo transportation needs."

They called for the expansion of the U.S.-flag fleet, and in particular, Jones Act vessels, that help serve as insulation against supply chain challenges we face as a nation. The policy statement also asks that lawmakers increase the cargo preference percentage for international aid cargoes. In 2012, Congress lowered the preference level from 75% to 50% which ushered in a precipitous (25%) reduction of the internationally-trading U.S.-flag fleet over the next decade.

The statement affirms TTD's opposition to flag-of-convenience registries used by vessel owners to shield themselves from paying U.S. taxes while skirting U.S. labor and environmental regulations. The policy statement has been posted on M.E.B.A.'s website accessible at [www.mebaunion.org](http://www.mebaunion.org)

## **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 2021. 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: Erik Barton (NY/NJ) who served as Chairman, William Warren (Houston), John Schaffer (Tampa), Eugene Smith III (Norfolk), Seth Massey (Oakland) and Steven Walker (Seattle). 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.

## **MARITIME LABOR COALITION FORMALIZING PUSH TO REVITALIZE AMERICAN MARINE HIGHWAY SYSTEM**

M.E.B.A. along with a coalition of labor unions affiliated under the AFL-CIO, including the Metal Trades Dept. and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, are working collectively as part of a task force to help solidify thousands of new union jobs in U.S. shipyards, ports, and vessels.

The Maritime Highway Coalition was created at a meeting at M.E.B.A. Headquarters in late January. They are advocating for the establishment of a vibrant American Marine Highway System by 2030 beginning with the construction of 200 new small container/feeder vessels.

As the global supply chain crisis continues, it is important to note that U.S.-flag vessels carry less than 2 percent of waterborne cargo that enters and leaves our nation. This leaves American businesses and consumers overwhelmingly reliant on foreign-flag, foreign-crewed ships to move goods throughout the world. One way to significantly fix this issue is to ensure that the U.S. controls a larger share of the global supply chain. This can be achieved through the construction of a new fleet of U.S.-built and U.S.-crewed feeder vessels to take on containers from the megaships at the port of arrival and transport the cargo along coasts to smaller and medium-sized underutilized ports, where the containers and their cargoes would be taken by rail and truck to their ultimate destination.

The newly established Coalition, that met again at AFL-CIO Headquarters in late March, will embark on a nationwide campaign to educate the general public, financial institutions, and the owners and shippers of cargo as to the benefits to our country of increasing the waterborne transportation of cargo along our seacoasts. The benefits of revitalizing the American Marine Highway System will include greater employment opportunities for the American workforce in our shipyards, ports, and vessels, reduced highway congestion that will help divert imports to vessels, reduction of overall carbon emissions by utilizing the greenest form of transportation: waterborne transportation, and importantly, revitalize Jones Act shipbuilding in the United States.

## **BLACK SEA MINES ARE A NIGHTMARE FOR COMMERCIAL SHIPPING**

International maritime unions and employers are urging governments to significantly increase efforts to ensure safe and secure passage for vessels following reports of mines drifting in the Black Sea. The NATO Shipping Center noted that drifting mines present a threat in the Northwest, West, and Southwest areas of the Black Sea. "Masters should take all precautions to mitigate the mine threat including avoiding floating objects, keep the forward area of the ship clear of crew, and using effective lookouts."

International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) Seafarers' Section Chair Dave Heindel called on governments to do more to ensure safe passage for commercial vessels and their mariners. "It is essential that the world's seafarers can continue to perform their duties safely and keep global supply chains moving."

### **ADMIRAL FAGAN WILL BE FIRST FEMALE COAST GUARD COMMANDANT**

Adm. Linda L. Fagan was nominated to serve as the 27<sup>th</sup> Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard making her the first woman to lead the service, once confirmed.

Currently, Adm. Fagan is Vice Commandant and previously served as Commander of the Coast Guard Pacific Area. She is the Coast Guard's first-ever Gold Ancient Trident, as the officer with the longest service record in the Marine Safety field. Admiral Fagan has served on all seven continents, including Antarctica. Operational tours include Commander, Sector New York, more than 15 years as a Marine Inspector, and sea duty on the heavy polar icebreaker USCGC POLAR STAR. She has worked with both the International Maritime Organization and International Labor Organization on flag state and port state issues. This work includes the development of the International Ship and Port Security Code (ISPS), and the Consolidated Maritime Labor Convention. Admiral Fagan holds a Bachelor of Science in Marine Science degree from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, a Master of Science in Marine Affairs degree from the University of Washington, and a Master in National Resource Strategy degree from the Industrial College of the Armed Forces. She has earned numerous personal and team awards during her 36 years of Coast Guard service.

Pending confirmation, Adm. Fagan is expected to relieve the current Commandant of the Coast Guard, Adm. Karl L. Schultz, during a change of command ceremony planned for June 1, 2022 in Washington, D.C. Adm. Schultz will retire following the change of command this summer.

### **FUTURE MSC OILER TO HONOR JUSTICE GINSBURG**

Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro announced that the 8<sup>th</sup> planned John Lewis-class replenishment oiler (T-AO) ship, that will sail for the Military Sealift Command, will be named the USNS RUTH BADER GINSBURG to honor the former Supreme Court Justice and women's rights activist. The vessels in the class are being named in honor of those who have fought for civil and human rights.

The first two vessels in the series, the USNS JOHN LEWIS and USNS HARVEY MILK, have already been christened and the LEWIS is set for delivery in the approaching weeks. The Lewis-class vessels will provide underway replenishment of fuel and stores to US Navy ships at sea and jet fuel for aircraft assigned to aircraft carriers. M.E.B.A. represents the engineers in MSC's Civilian Mariner fleet.

NASSCO is constructing the vessels in the series which will also include the USNS EARL WARREN (T-AO 207), USNS ROBERT F. KENNEDY (T-AO 208), USNS LUCY STONE (T-AO 209), USNS SOJOURNER TRUTH (T-AO 210) and USNS THURGOOD MARSHALL. The USNS GINSBURG will honor the pioneering advocate for women's rights turned Supreme Court Justice. Ginsburg made history as the second woman to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court, where she worked for 27 years. Secretary Del Toro also named Justice Ginsburg's daughter, Jane Ginsburg as the ship's sponsor.

The oilers have the ability to carry a load of 162,000 barrels of oil, maintain significant dry cargo capacity, aviation capability and a speed of 20 knots. The double-hulled T-AOs measure 742-feet in length with a full load displacement of 49,850 tons.

## TRANSPORTATION REIMBURSEMENT FOR 3-DAY CMES CLASSES

Round-trip transportation reimbursement is available for current and future 3-day classes held at the Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School.

Currently those courses include LNG as a Fuel (Combined Basic & Advanced IGF Code Operations) and Wartsila “Level 1” RT-Flex Basic.

## SPACE AVAILABLE AT UPCOMING BST REFRESHER COURSE AT CMES

There is still space available for the April 25 – 29, 2022 Basic Safety Training (BST) Refresher class at the Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School.

Please note that while this class covers the requirements for those who do not have 1 year of sea time in the last years, it will still work for those that do.

Applications may be sent via the CMES website, fax (410) 822-7220, or email to [applications@mebaschool.org](mailto:applications@mebaschool.org)

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

**Friday, April 8** – Honolulu@1100.

**Monday, May 2** – Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300.

**Tuesday, May 3** – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;

**Wednesday, May 4** – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; **Online HQ “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing mebahq@mebaunion.org**

**Thursday, May 5** – L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.

**Friday, May 6** – Honolulu@1100.

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*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](mailto: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](mailto:marco@mebaunion.org) Visit us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and check us out on Instagram.*