

# 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"*  
Number 6 – February 7, 2019



In this issue//Reps. Maloney, Garamendi Named to Key Subcommittee Posts//Puerto Rico Seeks 10-Year Jones Act Waiver//Document Checklist for Hall Visits//OCEAN GIANT in South Pole//Matson-Managed RRF Ship Part of Pacific Pathways Mission//NTSB List of Transport Safety Improvements//Return-to-Work Date Now Required to Ship//Lincoln's B-Day Upcoming//

### **REPS. MALONEY, GARAMENDI NAMED TO KEY SUBCOMMITTEE POSTS**

The maritime industry applauded two recent leadership appointments to a pair of Congressional subcommittees with jurisdiction over many of our issues. Longtime M.E.B.A. supporter Rep. John Garamendi (D-CA) will helm the House Armed Services Committee's Readiness Subcommittee. The Subcommittee has jurisdiction over Defense Department programs related to military readiness, training and logistics as well as the civilian and contract workforce, among other things.

Maritime industry supporter Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney (D-NY) takes the Chair of the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee's Coast Guard & Maritime Transportation Subcommittee. The Subcommittee oversees the Coast Guard as well as regulation of shipping, ports and waterways, among other things.

### **PUERTO RICO SEEKING 10-YEAR JONES ACT WAIVER FOR LNG PUSH; TRANSPORTATION LAWMAKERS PUSH BACK**

The Governor of Puerto Rico has petitioned the Department of Homeland Security for a 10-year Jones Act waiver to allow the shipment of American Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) to the island aboard foreign-flagged LNG carriers. After 2017's Hurricane Maria that devastated the island, Puerto Rico is making a push to convert most of its power generators from diesel fuel to natural gas.

Governor Ricardo Rossello Nevares said that there are no Jones Act eligible LNG carriers among 478 such vessels worldwide. The waiver is conditional upon the continued non-availability of Jones Act LNG carriers and would expire if one becomes available. The Governor noted that without a waiver, the island would be unable to purchase American natural gas and instead would rely on foreign sources.

Puerto Rico has long been an opponent of the Jones Act erroneously citing it as a major cause of their island's economic woes. In recent years they made hay with a biased Puerto Rico-commissioned study heralding alternate "facts" condemning the Jones Act. Puerto Rico commonly dismisses the non-partisan U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) study that discredited much of the Puerto Rico report as well as subsequent reports debunking many other anti-Jones Act claims.

Congressional leaders in the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure penned a letter to DHS Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen opposing the Governor's waiver request and urging its dismissal. The letter was dispatched by Committee Chairman Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-OR) and Ranking Member

Rep. Sam Graves (R-MO), as well as the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Sean Patrick Maloney (D-NY) and that Subcommittee's Ranking Member Rep. Bob Gibbs (R-OH).

The Members defended the Jones Act, which has been a fundamental pillar of U.S. maritime policy for nearly a century. "Administrative waivers of the Jones Act are constrained purposefully to rare cases where such a waiver is 'necessary in the interest of national defense.'...It is our belief that no valid national defense rationale exists to support this waiver request of the Jones Act for Puerto Rico, especially for a ten-year period," they wrote.

Visit <https://transportation.house.gov/imo/media/doc/Jones%20Act.pdf> to view the letter.

### **DOCUMENT CHECKLIST FOR HALL VISITS**

Members are encouraged to have their documents in order before showing up at their Union hall. Those who have recently upgraded their license should make sure their STCW reflects the upgrade. Your license, passport and other important documents should be valid for at least six months from the time you begin working aboard ship. Your drug-free certificates have to be valid at least until the day you join your ship.

If flying with your documents on the way to a hall, double-check that you haven't left any essential documents at home and make sure to keep your docs with you in your carry-on luggage. The primary documents you'll need include your Merchant Mariner Credential with current STCW, VSO or VPDSO endorsement, TWIC, Passport, USCG Medical Certificate, Annual M.E.B.A. physical card, Drug-free Certificate, Group Card and Dues Receipt. Permanent or relief employees should get their company clearance to the hall ahead of time. As you should know, no one can be dispatched to a job while on vacation or while receiving a paid vacation benefit without a waiver. The Union requires a return to work date when clearing for a vessel so make sure you have your vacation pay and vacation carry over statements, shipping discharge and port relief pay voucher for verification of Return to Work. It should also be noted that failure to obtain prior Union permission to return to work early, before the return to work date as listed on your carry-over or vacation statement, will subject you to a penalty.

Remember, a member or applicant cannot be dispatched for a job requiring STCW credentials if the Coast Guard Medical Certificate is due to expire prior to the completion of the job called. Members are encouraged to have their paperwork for the USCG Medical Certificate completed and to submit it for renewal at every annual physical in order to avoid an issue at job call. Certain jobs require proof of benzene or shot records, MSC Physical and MSC courses, GMDSS, High Voltage/Marine Propulsion, Crowd Control, Welding, or other courses to satisfy company requirements. Mariners are reminded to keep their vaccination records with them when sailing – especially when shipping onboard MSC-contracted vessels. Keep your documents with you at all times when travelling and NEVER leave them in your car. If unsure what is required, it is a good idea to check with an M.E.B.A. clinic. If you have questions about your documents, direct them to your local hall.

### **OCEAN GIANT IN SOUTH POLE THIS WEEK**

The Waterman Steamship-managed heavy lift vessel OCEAN GIANT arrived at Antarctica ice pier this week as part of this year's Operation Deep Freeze – the resupply mission to the South Pole's McMurdo Station.

The Military Sealift Command contracted the ship for the annual Joint Task Force Antarctica mission. MSC has supported Operation Deep Freeze since the Station was established in 1955, providing supplies and fuel to scientists.

OCEAN GIANT delivered 498 containers and various breakbulk such as frozen and dry food stores, building materials, vehicles, and electronic equipment and parts. Following the offload, 450 containers of retrograde—including station waste and recyclables, which will be returned to the U.S. for processing— as well as ice-core samples for scientific study, will be loaded onto the ship and returned to Port Hueneme, CA.

Interestingly, while much of America was gripped in the “Polar Vortex” which brought along sub-zero temps in certain areas, Antarctica was enjoying balmy 20 degree weather.

M.E.B.A. officers aboard the vessel include C/E Dave Morris who is a Calhoun School graduate, 1st A/E John Keohane and 2nd A/E Nick Berner. Also aboard is Crane Technician Dave Seltzer who is an M.E.B.A. retiree.

### **MATSON RRF SHIP DELIVERS FOR PACIFIC PATHWAYS, COBRA GOLD**

The Matson-managed Ready Reserve Force (RRF) vessel M/V CAPE HUDSON, which has been chartered by the Military Sealift Command, is engaged in a mobility operation called Pacific Pathways 19-1, where the ship hops around the Pacific region supporting follow-on missions. Pacific Pathways links a series of U.S. Pacific Command-directed security cooperation exercises with allied and partner militaries to a single MSC charter vessel that delivers equipment to support the various exercises.

The vessel recently offloaded equipment in Sattahip, Thailand in support of exercise Cobra Gold 2019. Exercise Cobra Gold is an annual, multilateral exercise co-hosted by the U.S. and Thailand. It helps improve capabilities of participating nations (29 nations total) to plan and conduct combined and joint operations; build relationships among participating nations across the region; and improve interoperability over a range of activities, including enhancing maritime security.

The CAPE HUDSON began the voyage from its home base in San Francisco and took on cargo in Tacoma, WA, Hawaii, Guam, and Japan. Thailand was the first point of discharge at the ports of Thung Prong and Chuk Samet and the ship offloaded approximately 435 end items and containers in about four days. The HUDSON departed Thailand on Jan. 25 and journeyed to its next port to offload more equipment for other missions.

Ship Master Donald Sacca, said, “I consider myself lucky that I’m on the ship that was selected for this mission and it has been a lot of fun and hard work. It’s amazing and everybody has been very happy. Commercial ships don’t usually get to go to these ports anymore; they go to the mega-container hubs, so this is a really good opportunity for the crew.”

### **NTSB ISSUES MOST WANTED LIST OF TRANSPORT SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS**

The National Transportation Safety Board announced its 2019–2020 Most Wanted List of Transportation Safety Improvements, during an event held at the National Press Club on Monday.

This is the 19<sup>th</sup> year in a row NTSB has issued the list. The 10 items on the list are:

- Eliminate Distractions
- End Alcohol and Other Drug Impairment
- Ensure the Safe Shipment of Hazardous Materials
- Fully Implement Positive Train Control
- Implement a Comprehensive Strategy to Reduce Speeding-Related Crashes
- Improve the Safety of Part 135 Aircraft Flight Operations
- Increase Implementation of Collision Avoidance Systems in All New Highway Vehicles
- Reduce Fatigue-Related Accidents
- Require Medical Fitness – Screen for and Treat Obstructive Sleep Apnea
- Strengthen Occupant Protection

There are 267 open NTSB safety recommendations associated with the 10 Most Wanted List items and the NTSB is focused on seeing 46 of those implemented within the next two years. The majority of these recommendations seek critical safety improvements by means other than regulation. Of the 46 safety recommendations the NTSB wants implemented in the next two years, 20 seek regulatory action to improve transportation safety.

#### **RETURN-TO-WORK DATE REQUIRED WHEN CLEARING**

To make sure Vacation Plan regulations are adhered to when dispatching jobs and to prevent issues and/or penalties with M.E.B.A. Plans, the Union is requiring a Return-to-Work date when clearing for a vessel. Members and applicants were updated on the new policy in a January 7<sup>th</sup> All Ports Bulletin sent to all halls and emailed to member and applicant addresses on file with Headquarters. The notice was also included in the packet for the regular January membership meetings. The policy goes into effect tomorrow (February 1, 2019) and will be strictly enforced.

It is the member's/applicant's responsibility to provide the proof/documentation to the Union dispatcher or representative that is required to determine the RTW date. In order to bid on work, members/applicants should maintain, along with all other required shipping documents, their most recent vacation pay statement, vacation carry over statement, shipping discharge and port relief pay voucher for verification of RTW.

#### **LINCOLNS B-DAY: HALLS CLOSED ON TUESDAY**

Halls will be closed on Tuesday Feb. 12 to honor the "Great Emancipator" Abraham Lincoln. Headquarters will remain open. Lincoln was born near Hodgenville, Kentucky on February 12, 1809 and began a dramatic and inspirational Presidency in March of 1861. Still the tallest-ever U.S. President (6'4"), Abraham Lincoln was a licensed bartender, lost eight elections during his 56 years, practiced law without a degree and invented a device to free steamboats stuck on sandbars. Honest Abe also briefly worked as a ferry operator and flatboat pilot, was beaten only once in 300 wrestling matches and frequently allowed his cat to eat on the table at the White House. The night before his assassination in 1865, Lincoln had a dream about "a fine ship entering harbor under full sail." Walt Whitman used that image and wrote the famous poem "O Captain! My Captain!" about the death of our 16th President.

**REGULAR MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS**

Monday, March 4 – **Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300;**  
Tuesday, March 5 – **CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;**  
Wednesday, March 6 – **Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;**  
Thursday, March 7 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;**  
Friday, March 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)*