

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)



"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"

M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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RRF SHIP MANAGEMENT AWARDS ANNOUNCED

Three M.E.B.A.-contracted companies have been awarded Maritime Administration contracts to operate, crew and maintain 21 of the 51 ships in the Ready Reserve Force (RRF).

The RRF is a subset of vessels within MarAd's National Defense Reserve Fleet (NDRF) that are a key element of Department of Defense (DOD) strategic sealift. As members know, the RRF vessels are berthed at strategic locations around the country to help enable the rapid mass movement of DOD equipment and supplies in times of national and humanitarian emergencies. Each ship in the fleet remains in a state of readiness so that an activation (with full crews aboard) can be achieved quickly. Vessels were awarded for a 5-year base period, plus an optional 5-year period, totaling ten years if the option is exercised. Overall, M.E.B.A. had a net loss of one vessel following the re-bid.

Keystone will continue to manage 12 vessels in the program. Pacific Gulf Marine, a non-M.E.B.A. ship manager, won the bid for the New Orleans-berthed CAPE KNOX and CAPE KENNEDY, which Keystone has managed since they became part of the program. But Keystone won the bid for the BRITTIN and the FISHER, two Bob Hope Class Large, Medium-Speed Roll-on/Roll-off (LMSR) vessels that were transferred from the MSC to MarAd several years ago. Those LMSRs, along with the BOB HOPE which they will continue to manage, are berthed in Portland, OR. Patriot decreases its participation in the program to 7 ships, down from 10. They will hand off the management of the CAPE T's berthed in Houston to TOTE Services. Those vessels include the CAPE TAYLOR, CAPE TEXAS and CAPE TRINITY. M.E.B.A.-contracted Sunrise Operations (part of Pasha) was the winning bidder for the two Cape W's, berthed in Baltimore, MD. Those vessels are the CAPE WASHINGTON and the CAPE WRATH.

Overall, the announced ship managers for the 51 RRF vessels include: TOTE (14); Keystone (12); Patriot (7); Ocean Duchess (6); PGM (6); Crowley (4); and Sunrise (2).

"The Ready Reserve Force supports our military men and women and strengthens our supply chains," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy. "When our military is called to respond, the RRF delivers the tanks, the trucks, and the supplies. These ships don't just support the mission—they are the linchpin that makes the mission possible. National security depends on strategic sealift, and strategic sealift depends on the RRF."

“Our contracts with seven ship managers will ensure the fleet stays ready, reliable, and responsive,” said Acting Administrator of the Maritime Administration Sang Yi. “MarAd has a tremendous responsibility to maintain the RRF so that during critical military, humanitarian, and natural disaster operations, Americans can rely on these vessels for logistics support.”

M.E.B.A. LAWSUIT TO FIGHT AGAINST EO THAT STRIPS MSC, ARMY CORPS MARINERS OF UNION RIGHTS

The M.E.B.A., alongside the AFL-CIO and five other national labor organizations, has filed suit against a sweeping executive order by President Trump that strips collective bargaining rights from many federal agency civilian employees, including those sailing in the Military Sealift Command and Army Corps of Engineers fleets.

Executive Order 14251, issued March 27, claims national security as justification for eliminating long-standing collective bargaining rights and union protections.

The lawsuit, filed in U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C., challenges the executive order as unconstitutional and beyond the President’s legal authority. It cites six violations, including infringement on First Amendment rights, due process, and existing federal labor law. According to the suit, the Defense Secretary’s implementation of the order was arbitrary. While some trade workers at a handful of military depots were spared, most civilian engineers and technical workers lost their union protections overnight. Agencies stopped processing grievances, dues check-offs, and other basic functions spelled out in long-standing collective bargaining agreements (CBAs).

M.E.B.A.’s participation in this legal challenge is consistent with our long tradition of defending workers’ rights — both at sea and ashore. Our members who serve in federal roles, like MSC and Army Corps know how critical union representation is to workplace fairness, safety, and accountability. As the case proceeds, M.E.B.A. will continue working with its allies across the labor movement to reverse this unprecedented assault and ensure no union member is left behind.

Continued membership is a lifeline to maintain the collective strength needed to preserve fair treatment and help protect your sailing career during uncertain times. MSC and Army Corps members are urged to check in with our Norfolk Union hall to verify contact information and speak with our Government Fleet Representatives who are keeping the fleet apprised of the latest developments. Affected members should check in with M.E.B.A. Government Fleet Representative Craig Moran at the Norfolk Union hall at (757) 440-1820 or govtfleet@mebaunion.org. Assistant Representative Ola Lassley can be reached at the same number or via email at Norfolkdispatcher@mebaunion.org.

SENATE BOOSTS MARITIME SECURITY FUNDING AS HOUSE FALLS SHORT

The Senate Appropriations Committee approved its version of the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (T-HUD) Appropriations (T-HUD) bill last week, delivering strong support for a pair of important U.S.-flag shipping programs. The Senate proposal fully funds the Maritime Security Program (MSP) at \$390 million and provides \$122 million for the Tanker Security Program (TSP) - exceeding the program’s authorized amount by \$2 million.

This marks a significant contrast to the House version, which proposes reduced funding levels for both critical maritime programs. Under the House proposal, MSP would receive \$380 million, falling \$10 million short of its authorized level. That shortfall would translate to a drop in the per-vessel

stipend from \$6.5 million to \$6.3 million in future years. TSP fared worse, with just \$90 million allocated to support 20 vessels — a steep cut from the \$120 million requested by the White House.

Compounding concerns, the House draft includes language that would reclaim unspent funds from both MSP and TSP — resources that have previously acted as a vital financial buffer in emergencies like government shutdowns or budget delays. These rescissions could hinder the programs' ability to maintain timely payments. Carriers participating in MSP have warned that under the terms of their operating agreements, they may be forced to withdraw vessels if payments are not made in full and on schedule.

M.E.B.A. and other maritime labor unions responded swiftly, voicing their concerns directly to House Appropriations staff. They reiterated the need for full, stable funding and rejected any cuts that would jeopardize U.S.-flag vessels or mariner jobs.

However, Congress is likely headed to a partial or full-year Continuing Resolution (CR) bill for Fiscal Year 2026, which would provide flat funding - effectively serving as a cut to our programs. The coming weeks remain crucial as maritime advocates press lawmakers to ensure these essential national security programs are fully funded.

HOUTHIS THREATEN BROADER SHIPPING ATTACKS IN LATEST PHASE OF ANTI-ISRAEL CAMPAIGN

The Houthi movement in Yemen has vowed to expand its maritime campaign by targeting commercial vessels linked to any company conducting business with Israeli ports, regardless of the vessel's country of origin or its destination. The announcement, made late Sunday, marks what the group calls the "fourth phase" of its ongoing naval operations against Israel. Backed by Iran, the Houthis have been attacking international shipping since late 2023 in response to the war in Gaza, saying their actions are in solidarity with the Palestinian people. The campaign has severely disrupted trade in the Red Sea, a key global shipping route responsible for moving around \$1 trillion in goods annually.

In their latest statement, Houthi leaders declared that all ships affiliated with companies that maintain ties to Israeli ports are now considered legitimate targets. The warning makes clear that nationality is irrelevant, and that the group will strike vessels anywhere within reach of its forces. The Houthis further urged nations to press Israel to halt its military operations in Gaza and lift its blockade, stating this would be the only way to avoid a further escalation of attacks at sea.

Earlier in July, the group was behind deadly assaults on two Liberian-flagged, Greek-owned bulk carriers — the MAGIC SEAS and the ETERNITY C. The MAGIC SEAS was abandoned before it sank, with all 22 crew members rescued. The ETERNITY C, however, suffered a far worse fate: four crew members were killed, and 10 others were taken hostage.

Since launching its campaign in November 2023, the Houthis have attacked over 100 merchant vessels using a combination of missiles and drones. A temporary pause in strikes occurred during a brief ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas war, but the group soon resumed operations. In response, U.S. forces launched a sustained aerial offensive targeting Houthi positions. That campaign ended in May 2025, following a negotiated agreement between U.S. officials and Houthi representatives. The deal included a cessation of American airstrikes in exchange for a halt to maritime attacks. However, the Houthis later clarified that they had not agreed to refrain from striking vessels they believe are affiliated with

Israeli interests. With the latest escalation, the conflict's impact on global trade continues to widen, as more shipping lines face growing uncertainty and danger in one of the world's most vital maritime corridors.

HYBRID-ELECTRIC WENATCHEE RETURNS TO FULL SERVICE

The M/V WENATCHEE, one of the largest ferries in the Washington State Ferries (WSF) fleet, has resumed full-time service on the Seattle – Bainbridge Island route as the system's first hybrid-electric vessel. The milestone marks a major step toward the agency's long-term goal of cutting emissions and modernizing its aging fleet. The vessel had been in service part-time since re-entering the fleet in June following its conversion. The 21-month project was handled by Vigor Marine Seattle. Key work completed at the shipyard included the removal of two diesel generators, construction of two battery rooms housing 864 battery modules, installation of new propulsion control systems, thousands of feet of new electric and fiber optic cable, and upgrades to onboard systems and passenger areas. Cosmetic improvements also came with the overhaul: the ferry was thoroughly cleaned, received fresh exterior paint, and had some of its interior seat coverings replaced. The WENATCHEE is expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 15% but once shoreside charging stations are in place at the terminals, the ferry will run primarily on electricity — cutting emissions by up to 95% compared to its previous diesel-only operation.

The vessel's relaunch comes at a pivotal time for the WSF. The average vessel in the fleet is more than three decades old, with five ships exceeding 60 years. WSF has plans to build 16 new ferries and retrofit six existing vessels by 2040. A contract to electrify ferry terminals is expected to be announced soon. In addition, a two-tiered wage system within the WSF has undervalued marine engineers and oilers on the vessels, and along with other bad management decisions, has directly led to staffing shortages and service disruptions that have further diminished the fleet.

M.E.B.A. AT TTD EXECUTIVE MEETINGS

M.E.B.A. took part in discussions this week with over 75 transportation labor leaders in New York City this week at the Transportation Trades Department (TTD)'s 2025 Convention and Executive Committee Meeting. M.E.B.A. was represented at the meetings by Secretary-Treasurer Roland Rexha and Government Affairs Director Erick Siahaan. M.E.B.A. is a founding member of the TTD which represents unions in the maritime, aviation, rail, transit, trucking, highway, longshore, and related industries.

Members of TTD's Executive Committee unanimously adopted the federation's legislative, political, and regulatory agenda for the upcoming year and re-elected President Greg Regan and Secretary-Treasurer Shari Semelsberger to lead the organization. Among the adopted policy statements were a call to Congress to pass the SHIPS Act to revitalize the U.S. maritime industry through shipbuilding, strengthening of U.S. cargo preference, and investment in the maritime workforce.

Representatives Andrew Garbarino (R-NY-2) and Mike Lawler (R-NY-17) gave remarks to the Executive Committee and highlighted the need for bipartisan investments in transportation and infrastructure. Congressman Donald Norcross (D-NJ-1) received the Larry Willis Leadership Award for his commitment to working people and transportation safety. Union leaders also visited various sites around New York City to see first-hand how workers move goods and people across Manhattan and the outer boroughs. In addition, Secretary-Treasurer Rexha led a visit aboard Staten Island Ferry vessels discussing the dynamics of the important work our members do in this high-profile fleet.

SELF-SERVICE TOOLS ON NMC WEBSITE

The National Maritime Center (NMC) announced the launch of two new self-service tools, available via the NMC website, designed to assist mariners and industry stakeholders with obtaining Mariner Credential Application Status and Mariner Credential Verification.

- Mariner Credential Application Status: This tool allows users to receive application status updates via e-mail. To use this service, users must provide Mariner's Last Name, Mariner's Reference Number, and a valid e-mail address where results will be sent. Note: Application status data is updated Monday through Friday by 8:00 a.m. EST.
- Mariner Credential Verification: This tool provides credential verification results, via e-mail, for merchant mariner credentials and medical certificates. To use this service, users must provide Mariner's Last Name, Mariner's Reference Number, and a valid e-mail address where results will be sent. Once a submission is complete, users may click the Submit another response link to perform additional verifications. Note: Credential verification data is updated Monday through Friday by 8:00 a.m. EST.

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

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

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

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

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

Friday, August 8 – **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. 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