

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)



"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"

M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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WHITE HOUSE ISSUES 60-DAY JONES ACT WAIVER

Aiming to ease pressure on energy markets during the conflict with Iran, the White House announced this week that the President authorized a sweeping 60-day waiver of the Jones Act. According to press secretary Karoline Leavitt, the temporary Jones Act suspension would enable commodities — including oil, natural gas, fertilizer, and coal — to move more freely between U.S. ports over the next two months.

American maritime labor unions do not agree and a statement issued by them on Wednesday expressed alarm and disappointment. "America's maritime labor unions are deeply concerned about the Administration's broad Jones Act waiver, which undermines our national security, weakens military readiness, and hands critical maritime work to foreign vessel operators," the statement read. Along with the M.E.B.A., it was signed by the AMO, ARA, MM&P, MFOW, Maritime Trades Department, AFL-CIO; SUP, SIU and the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO.

They pointed out that, "Jones Act waivers are intended to meet a strict legal standard and are traditionally granted only in narrow, clearly defined national security emergencies where U.S.-flag capacity is unavailable. Maritime labor has supported narrowly tailored Jones Act waivers in the past when they were obviously justified in the national interest, but this sweeping action does not meet that standard. At a time of heightened global instability where American sailors are being targeted in the Persian Gulf and surrounding areas, opening U.S. waterways to foreign adversaries through an expansive Jones Act waiver further jeopardizes America's safety and security in open waters. Such action only permits more abuse of our nation's cabotage laws and sends a damaging signal about the nation's commitment to sustain a strong U.S. maritime industry and workforce."

"To be clear, this decision will not provide meaningful relief at the gas pump. It has been plainly shown that the primary driver of gasoline prices remains the global cost of crude oil, and multiple analyses demonstrate that domestic shipping accounts for less than one cent per gallon. Any marginal savings will not reach consumers but will instead reward foreign shipping interests at the expense of American workers. Maritime labor calls on the Administration to reverse course and work with stakeholders on real solutions that address energy costs without sacrificing American jobs, national security, or the long-term strength of the U.S. maritime industrial base."

STUDY FINDS JONES ACT WAIVER WOULD HAVE NEGLIGIBLE IMPACT ON GAS PRICES

A new analysis from Navigistics Consulting casts serious doubts on any claims that waiving the Jones Act would deliver meaningful relief at the pump for American consumers. The March 12, 2026 study concludes that any potential savings from such a waiver would be “well less than a penny per gallon” - and unlikely to reach drivers at all. At the center of the debate is a persistent argument that suspending the Jones Act, which requires goods shipped between U.S. ports to be carried on American-built, owned, and crewed vessels, could significantly lower fuel costs. But Navigistics’ findings suggest those claims don’t hold up under scrutiny.

According to the study, even under the most optimistic scenario, a Jones Act waiver would reduce the national average gasoline price by just \$0.0027 per gallon. That’s less than a third of a penny. The reason is simple: only about 6.5% of U.S. gasoline consumption, roughly 8.9 billion gallons out of 136.6 billion gallons annually, actually moves on Jones Act-compliant tankers. Even if shipping costs dropped dramatically for that small segment, the overall effect on nationwide prices would be barely noticeable. The study emphasizes that transportation is only one component of gasoline pricing. In November 2025, distribution and marketing, including trucking, pipelines, and marine transport, accounted for about 20% of the retail price, or roughly \$0.61 per gallon when gas averaged \$3.05.

Crucially, Jones Act tanker rates have remained stable even as gasoline prices have fluctuated. Daily charter rates for medium-range (MR) tankers have held steady at about \$90,000 per day for over a year — unchanged during both lower and higher fuel price periods. This stability undermines claims that domestic shipping costs are a primary driver of rising gasoline prices. Instead, the study reinforces that crude oil prices, not transportation, are the dominant factor influencing what consumers pay at the pump. Jones Act tankers primarily serve a handful of specific routes, most notably shipments from Gulf Coast refineries to Florida, which lacks pipeline access. Other routes include limited deliveries along the East Coast and movements within the West Coast refining system. Because these routes represent such a small slice of total U.S. gasoline distribution, any cost reductions from foreign-flag vessels entering the market under a waiver would have limited reach.

Even more striking is the study’s conclusion that consumers would likely never see any savings at all. Most Jones Act tankers are already locked into long-term contracts that must be paid regardless of whether the vessels are used. As a result, a waiver would primarily benefit new market entrants, particularly commodity traders, rather than refiners or retailers. The report also challenges the assumption that foreign-flag vessels would provide cheaper transportation. In some cases, comparable international shipping rates are actually equal to or higher than Jones Act rates, particularly in today’s market conditions.

With the U.S. gasoline market valued at nearly \$400 billion annually, the study suggests that even aggressive assumptions about shipping cost reductions would barely move the needle. Any marginal gains would likely be absorbed within the supply chain rather than passed on to consumers. For policymakers searching for ways to ease fuel costs, the report delivers a blunt conclusion — waiving the Jones Act is unlikely to provide the relief many are hoping for.

SANCTIONS EASED ON VENEZUELAN OIL

The U.S. Treasury has eased sanctions on Venezuela, allowing American companies to buy oil from Venezuela's state-owned oil company, Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A. (PdVSA), and its subsidiaries. The administration continues to look to boost global supply amid tensions with Iran.

The move follows disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz that have driven up global oil prices and reflects growing pressure to stabilize energy markets. While the policy is intended to spur investment in Venezuela's struggling oil sector and expand supply, strict controls remain — payments must go through U.S.-supervised accounts, and dealings with countries like Russia and Iran are still banned.

M.E.B.A. and several maritime unions continue to insist to Congress that any crude oil imported from Venezuela should be transported exclusively on U.S.-flag vessels by American mariners. The M.E.B.A., AMO, MM&P and the SIU point out that such a cabotage ruling would strengthen the U.S. maritime workforce, reduce reliance on foreign-controlled vessels and align with President Trump's America First agenda and push to revitalize U.S.-flag shipping.

PARTIAL SHUTDOWN LEADS TO MARINER DOC EXPIRATION DELAY

Due to the partial government shutdown, the U.S. Coast Guard is currently unable to process applications for mariner credentials. To provide relief to affected mariners, the Coast Guard is granting an extension, effective immediately, to Merchant Mariner Credentials (MMC) (National endorsements only) and Medical Certificates (National and Pilot expiration dates only). This extension is valid through June 30, 2026, for mariners whose credentials expire between January 1 and April 30, 2026.

The National Maritime Center (NMC) and all Regional Examination Centers (RECs) remain closed. Customer walk-in service at the RECs is suspended. Examinations and other REC appointments are cancelled. The Application Submission Portal (ASAP) for submission of applications and supporting documentation remains active. Processing will resume once appropriations are restored. For updates on NMC and REC operating status, please monitor the NMC website located [here](#). For questions, contact their Customer Service Center via the NMC online chat system, by e-mailing IASKNMC@uscg.mil, or by calling 1-888-IASKNMC (427-5662).

M.E.B.A. reposted the latest NMC notices on our website in the Documents & Member Notices section.

M.E.B.A. NETWORKS WITH CMA IN HQ MEETING

The M.E.B.A. had a productive and forward-looking meeting earlier this week with leadership from California Maritime Academy (Cal Poly), underscoring a shared commitment to expand collaborative efforts. Cal Poly Maritime Academy Superintendent Rear Admiral Eric C. Jones joined M.E.B.A. officials at our D.C. Headquarters along with Executive Director of Advancement Natasha Montazeri. The M.E.B.A. delegation included President Adam Vokac, Secretary-Treasurer Roland Rexha, and Government Affairs Director Erick Siahaan. They were joined by Caitlyn Tierney of the American Maritime Congress.

Discussions covered a range of pressing industry priorities. Both sides emphasized the importance of continued engagement with lawmakers to help ease the burden of rising fuel costs associated with ship training. Participants also explored ways to expand and solidify the existing partnership between the union and the Academy, while addressing how the Union can help assist Cal Poly with its staffing

challenges. A key theme of the meeting was the M.E.B.A.'s role in shaping and sustaining the nation's maritime workforce. Central to that effort is the M.E.B.A. Cadet Internship Program, which provides cadets with a practical introduction to deep-sea sailing careers under union contracts. The program continues to serve as a valuable pipeline, offering cadets insight into the benefits, structure, and long-term opportunities available through M.E.B.A. membership.

Academy officials expressed strong enthusiasm for building on this momentum, noting their interest in more intentionally aligning institutional efforts with the M.E.B.A. to better support workforce development and meet evolving industry needs. The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to deepen collaboration and pursue meaningful initiatives that will benefit both cadets and the broader U.S. maritime sector.

HAAS IS NEW CMES ACADEMIC SERVICES DIRECTOR

The M.E.B.A. Training Plan Board of Trustees and the Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School (CMES) are pleased to announce that Sylvan Haas is joining the CMES as the new Director of Academic Services. Following an extensive search that included a number of highly qualified candidates, Mr. Haas emerged as the clear choice for this key leadership role. A 2006 graduate of California Maritime Academy and a sailing M.E.B.A. member for nearly two decades, he officially joins CMES on Monday.

A third-generation M.E.B.A. member, Sylvan brings a deep-rooted connection to the maritime industry. He shipped out on a variety of vessels during a distinguished sailing career and comes in shoreside after serving as Chief Engineer aboard the MAERSK DETROIT for the past nine years. His practical sailing experience and technical knowledge will help shape CMES academic programming and curriculum development, ensuring the school's training remains aligned with the evolving demands of the maritime industry.

As Director of Academic Services, Haas will oversee all academic programs at CMES, helping ensure that courses continue to meet regulatory requirements set by industry stakeholders and governing authorities. He will also work closely with the school's instructional staff, supporting instructors and helping ensure that training reflects the latest industry practices and real-world operational experience.

Sylvan's addition to the CMES leadership team will further strengthen the school's long-standing reputation for delivering state-of-the-art training to M.E.B.A. members and industry partners. His work will support CMES's mission of preparing highly skilled Marine Officers whose technical expertise keeps M.E.B.A.-contracted vessels operating safely and efficiently around the world. The M.E.B.A. family is excited to welcome Sylvan to the team!

MORE ROOM IN UPCOMING CMES COURSES

The Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School still has room for additional students for upcoming courses for Industrial Networking & Instrumentation. Get your spot at one of the open courses before it fills up:

- **March 23 – 27 Industrial Networking**
- **June 1 – 12 Instrumentation**

Applications can be sent via the CMES website, faxed to (410) 822-7220, or emailed to applications@mebaschool.org

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

Monday, April 6 – **Closed. Jesse Calhoon Day (Observed)**

Tuesday, April 7 – **Boston@1200; CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230; Seattle (Fife)@1300.**

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

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

Friday, April 10 – **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 Calhoon 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