

# 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 BUDGET PROPOSAL**

President Donald Trump released his fiscal year 2026 budget proposal late last week. This “skinny budget” outlines the administration’s discretionary funding priorities for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2025 and proposes a \$163 billion reduction in non-defense discretionary spending, approximately a 23% cut from the 2025 enacted levels. The budget emphasizes increased funding for defense, border security, and infrastructure, while aiming to reduce expenditures on programs the administration deems non-essential.

One of those programs deemed as non-essential is the PL-480 Food for Peace (Title II) program that provides cargoes for U.S.-flag shipping. The White House recommended no money for the program and has made efforts to shut down the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) which administers Food for Peace. The program’s requirement that at least 50% of international food aid cargoes be carried on U.S.-flag ships has been vital for the industry and is important to help maintain a pool of qualified American mariners. It is unfortunate that USAID’s intentional disregard of U.S. maritime weakened the effectiveness of the program and its benefit to our nation. Declining food aid cargoes could contribute to a smaller mariner pool that further complicates the nation’s ability to fulfill DOD sealift requirements. The M.E.B.A. and other U.S.-flag shipping interests have supported efforts to shift the administration of Food for Peace to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The skinny budget is not clear on certain funding priorities for U.S.-flag shipping such as the Maritime Security Program and Tanker Security Program, but it does call for an expansion of U.S. shipbuilding capacity by investing in America’s shipyards and the industrial base.

The American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA), which represents more than 130 seaports, was pleased with the recommendation of \$550 million for the Port Infrastructure Development Program which, combined with the previously-provided \$450 million appropriation (Bipartisan Infrastructure Law money), would drive \$1 billion in maritime infrastructure projects at ports coast to coast. However, AAPA was less enthused with the budget’s recommendation to cut over \$1 billion from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF), used for port maintenance and dredging. AAPA President Cary Davis said that those proposed cuts “are incompatible with the Administration’s desire and aims to revitalize our nation’s maritime industry and power. A strong maritime industry requires

deep harbors that are properly maintained. We call on Congress to continue releasing the unspent balance accumulated in the HMTF.”

### **CARMEL TAPPED FOR MARAD POST AFTER SADLER NOMINATION WITHDRAWN**

The White House withdrew the nomination of Brent Sadler as the next Maritime Administrator replacing him with Stephen Carmel, a shipping company president and former Captain. No official reason was provided for the Sadler withdrawal.

Carmel is the current President of U.S. Marine Management LLC (USMMI), which manages a fleet of U.S.-flag vessels. If confirmed, he would be the first Administrator with a Master’s Unlimited license to helm MarAd since Captain William Schubert in the early 2000s.

A 1979 Merchant Marine Academy graduate, he sailed with Maritime Overseas Corporation and the Military Sealift Command among others. He also worked at Maersk Line’s U.S.-flag operations division.

### **REOPENER AGREEMENT REACHED WITH HAPAG/CROWLEY**

M.E.B.A. negotiators have reached a beneficial new reopener agreement with Hapag/Crowley covering the five “Express class” ships. Recently, those U.S.-flag M.E.B.A.-crewed vessels that had been sailing in the Trans-Atlantic AL3 service were redeployed to the West Coast to a new Trans-Pacific service. They include the DELAWARE EXPRESS, COLORADO EXPRESS, HUDSON EXPRESS, MISSOURI EXPRESS, and POTOMAC EXPRESS.

The overall MOU runs through Sept. 2033. This wage and benefit agreement covers the period from October 1, 2025 through September 30, 2029. Another reopener will take place in 2029. Among other gains, negotiators got generous wage and MPB increases for our members in the fleet as well as improvements to Benefit Plan contributions. In addition, Jesse Calhoun’s birthday (April 4<sup>th</sup>) was added as a paid holiday for the fleet beginning in calendar year 2026.

Our Gulf Coast V.P. Adam Smith headed up talks with assistance from Tampa Branch Agent Nicole Greenway, along with rank-and-file members who participated in negotiations. The details of the new agreement were discussed with the membership at the regular meetings this week.

### **AGREEMENT TO END HOUSHI AGGRESSION AGAINST U.S. SHIPS**

Diplomatic talks following U.S. military attacks against Houthi targets have resulted in an agreement to allow safe passage of U.S. ships in the Red Sea and waters near Yemen. In a pact mediated by Oman, the U.S. and Houthi rebels have agreed not to “target each other.”

Since November 2023, Houthi militants in Yemen had conducted drone and missile attacks on shipping, including American vessels, in the Red Sea, Bab al-Mandab Strait, and Gulf of Aden, citing support for Palestinians in the Gaza conflict as their motive. The U.S. and its partners since launched over 900 targeted strikes against the rebels, but this new administration further widened U.S. airstrikes to help neutralize the Houthi threat. In January, the Houthis announced they would restrict their attacks on commercial vessels to Israeli-linked ships and there have not been reported ship attacks there since late last year.

Since the attacks began a year and a half ago, responsible shipping companies have diverted their vessels away from the Red Sea and Suez Canal approaches in the name of mariner and vessel safety, though this has led to increased transit times and additional costs. It is not clear whether this new agreement will prompt shipping companies to reestablish their vessels in the vacated routes. A Houthi spokesperson said that the rebels would maintain their ongoing posture against Israeli vessels and other interests but have agreed to de-escalate tensions with the United States.

### **CMES HAS OPENINGS IN UPCOMING WARTSILA COURSES**

The Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School announced that there are still openings for various dates in two upcoming courses:

***Wartsila RT Flex Basic (3-day course, Wednesday - Friday)*** - No time required on a flex engine - Students should expect to be in class until 1600 on the Friday. Still openings for the courses running from May 21–23 and from June 4–6!

***Wartsila RT Flex Operator (5-day course)*** - Pre-requisite: Time on a flex engine or have taken the Basic course – Still openings for the courses running from June 2–6 and from June 9–13!

Applications for these courses can be sent via the CMES website ([www.mebaschool.org](http://www.mebaschool.org)), faxed to (410) 822-7220, or emailed to [applications@mebaschool.org](mailto:applications@mebaschool.org)

### **UPCOMING MARITIME DAY ACTIVITIES**

National Maritime Day will officially be observed on Thursday, May 22.

Maritime Day was first designated by Congress in 1933 to commemorate the May 22, 1819 Atlantic crossing of the S.S. SAVANNAH that sailed from Savannah, GA to Liverpool, England, using steam propulsion. The occasion is set aside as a time to reflect on America's maritime heritage and to honor mariners who have defended our Nation's freedom.

The National Maritime Day observance in Washington DC will take place on that day at Department of Transportation Headquarters. The theme this year is “Restoring America’s Maritime Dominance!” and will be conducted in the building’s West Atrium from 1000-1100. Later on in the day, the Propeller Club is sponsoring a reception on the rooftop of M.E.B.A. Headquarters – the venue known as “Capitol View.”

In Oakland, the Propeller Club of Northern California is hosting their observance on Wednesday May 21 at Scott’s Seafood from 1130 to 1330. In San Pedro, CA, an observance and memorial service will be held at the American Merchant Marine Veterans Memorial & Walls of Honor, located on Harbor Boulevard on Thursday, May 22, 2025, starting at 11 a.m. Lunch will follow at 12:30 PM at the Ports O’Call restaurant.

These are just a few of the Maritime Day observances happening around the nation. What’s happening in your neck of the woods? Check your local listings, get out on that day while showing off your M.E.B.A. colors and let people know that U.S.-flag shipping and American mariners matter!

## **GET YOUR SPOT FOR CAA-M.E.B.A. PICNIC/150<sup>th</sup> CELEBRATION**

The entire M.E.B.A. membership, active and retired, and especially Calhoon graduates, are invited to the Calhoon Alumni Association (CAA) Reunion scheduled for June 27-29 at the Calhoon M.E.B.A. Engineering School. The weekend will also include a celebration of the M.E.B.A.'s 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The Union is in its 150<sup>th</sup> year as of February 23 and there will be much rejoicing. Information, event fees, and registration forms are on the CMES website located at [www.mebaschool.org](http://www.mebaschool.org). Look for the CAA page link.

The weekend kicks off with the traditional Golf Tournament on Friday, June 27 at 1000. There will be an evening muster at the Calhoon Saloon later that evening. The party on the Manor House Lawn will take place all day Saturday, June 28. This is a great family event that you should be sure to sign up for. Direct any questions to [caa@mebaschool.org](mailto:caa@mebaschool.org) and check out the School website to get the complete lowdown. Take this opportunity to spread the word throughout the M.E.B.A. world as well as to past Calhoon School cadets, instructors, shipmates, friends, and families.

## **GOVT. FLEET MARINERS SHOULD CHECK IN WITH THE NORFOLK HALL**

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](mailto:govtfleet@mebaunion.org). Assistant Representative Ola Lassley can be reached at the same number or via email at [Norfolkdispatcher@mebaunion.org](mailto:Norfolkdispatcher@mebaunion.org).

It would be prudent for our members in those fleets to maintain their good standing by using M.E.B.A.'s online payment portal at <https://meba.workingsystems.com>. The Membership Department at Headquarters can provide assistance with any technical issues by phone at (202) 638-5355 or via email at [membership@mebaunion.org](mailto:membership@mebaunion.org). Those enrolling in the M.E.B.A. Payment Portal must have an email address on file with Headquarters that correlates to their payment portal i.d., so make sure the HQ records match. Payments can also be made in person at any M.E.B.A. Union hall or office. To ensure continuity, members are advised to complete payments through the fourth quarter.

In the wake of Executive Order 14251 that intends to strip collective bargaining rights and union protections for many federal agency employees, M.E.B.A. continues to maintain its status as the recognized representative for Engineering Officers in the Military Sealift Command and Army Corps of Engineers at this hour, and contract protections remain intact. The M.E.B.A. is reaching out to our mariners working for MSC and Army Corps to inform them that they can continue to shield their sailing careers by maintaining their membership in the M.E.B.A. Petitioned-for waivers exempting those Government Fleet mariners from the E.O. have not yet materialized. If the order stands and the affected mariners are turned into at-will employees, the Union will provide options for mariners to protect themselves and avenues to reap the benefits of union membership.

Recently, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) discontinued processing union dues through payroll deductions. Even with successful waivers, the payroll deduction system for union dues is unlikely to be reinstated.

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

Friday, May 9 – Honolulu@1100

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

Tuesday, June 3 – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230.

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

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

Friday, June 6 – 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](mailto:mebahq@mebaunion.org). Website: [www.mebaunion.org](http://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](mailto: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](http://www.mebaschool.org). M.E.B.A. Plans is at (410) 547-9111 or [www.mebaplans.org](http://www.mebaplans.org)*