

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)



"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"
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RETAILERS BRACING FOR ILA STRIKE

The nation's major container ports are expected to see another busy month in September ahead of a potential labor strike at East and Gulf Coast ports. "This is a critical time as retailers prepare for the all-important holiday season, and we need every port in the country working at full capacity," said National Retail Federation V.P. Jonathan Gold. "Many retailers have brought cargo in early and shifted to alternate ports as a precaution, but it is vital that labor and management at the East Coast and Gulf Coast ports actually sit down at the negotiating table and bargain in good faith for a new contract so we can avoid a disruption of any kind when their contract expires. A strike would be another blow to the supply chain as it continues to face challenges, and to the nation's economy at a time when inflation is finally coming down and the Fed is poised to lower interest rates."

The contract between the International Longshoremen's Association and the United States Maritime Alliance covering East and Gulf Coast ports is set to expire on September 30. The ILA has vowed to strike if a new contract is not reached by then. NRF last week renewed its call for both sides to come to an agreement before the contract expires, with NRF President Matthew Shay saying a disruption "would significantly impact retailers, consumers and the economy."

"Import levels are being impacted by concerns about the potential East and Gulf Coast port strike," Hackett Associates Founder Ben Hackett said. "This has caused some cargo owners to bring forward shipments, bumping up June-through-September imports. In addition, some importers are weighing the decision to bring forward some goods, particularly from China, that could be impacted by rising tariffs following the election."

In a newly released video, available [here](#), ILA President Harold Daggett said, "The shippers...might think the ILA won't go on strike. Let me tell them and all of America, the ILA most definitely will hit the streets on October 1 if we don't get the kind of contract we deserve. These greedy companies have made billions in the past few years, especially during COVID. We never shut the ports down during COVID. ILA members lost their lives while people worked from home...We kept going to keep these companies alive."

He stressed, “Mark my words. We’ll shut them down October 1st if we don’t get the kind of wages we deserve.” 300 ILA Wage Scale delegates adjourned their meetings last week with a unanimous vote in support of a coastwide strike, if needed.

President Daggett also pledged to form an alliance with dockworkers and seafaring unions around the world that would band together to prevent companies from installing fully automated terminals. “Because in today’s world,” he said, “you have three big companies that want to push automation on everybody. Well, I’ve had it up to here. The only way to we can fight this is by having this alliance. I’m working on it now...”

NEW MASS MARITIME TRAINING VESSEL CHRISTENED

Philly Shipyard has christened the second of five National Security Multi-Mission vessels (NSMVs). The PATRIOT STATE II will be the new training ship for Massachusetts Maritime Academy cadets who had previously trained aboard a 55-year old vessel.

Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg and Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro both attended the christening, as well as Maritime Administrator Rear Adm. Ann Phillips and Massachusetts Maritime Academy President Adm. Fran McDonald.

SUNY Maritime took delivery of the first NSMV in the series last year. The PATRIOT STATE II is the second. Maine Maritime Academy is expected to take delivery of the new STATE OF MAINE later this year. The LONE STAR STATE will be delivered to Texas A&M Maritime Academy sometime next year. The fifth and final NSMV is bound for California State University Maritime Academy (Cal Maritime) upon its completion in 2026. In addition to providing best-in-class training for America’s future mariners, the NSMVs will be available to support humanitarian assistance and disaster relief missions in times of need.

Vessel specifications: Length: 159.85 meters (525 feet); Beam: 27 meters (88 feet); Draft, scantling: 7 meters (21 feet); Total berthing: 760 persons; Speed: 18 kts; Deadweight: 8,487 tons. Installed power: 16,800 kW (22,500 hp), plus 900 kW (1,200 hp) emergency generator; Propulsion: 4 x Wabtec 16V250MDC engines,[1] single all electric drive shaft.

SALE OF RETIRED WSF VESSELS FALLS THROUGH

The sale of two decommissioned Washington State Ferries (WSF) vessels to a South American businessman has been terminated after concerns arose about missed deadlines and the purchaser’s treatment of a towing crew.

It had previously been announced that the ferries ELWHA and KLAHOWYA had been purchased by businessman Nelson Armas for \$100,000 each with the buyer intending to transport the ferries to Ecuador to be scrapped. But delays began after tow equipment failed in the attempted move before allegations came to light that Armas may have subjected the towing crew aboard the *Wycliffe* to severe mistreatment.

WSF noted that at the time of the purchase they were “not made aware of the concerns raised by the *Wycliffe* crew regarding poor living conditions and fear of intimidation until they were reported in the media. While Armas has denied these reports, WSF places a strong emphasis on seafarer welfare.”

They subsequently canceled the purchase and sales agreements and began the process of finding a new purchaser claiming that multiple new buyers have shown interest. WSF says that because the vessels were not removed by the specified deadline in the sales agreement, Armas must forfeit the \$200,000 he paid for the boats.

The sale of a third decommissioned ferry, the HYAK, is also in progress.

MEMBERS SHOULD KEEP A CHECK ON DOCS & NOTICES SITE

Members and applicants are reminded to make use of the “Documents & Member Notices” section of the M.E.B.A. website (www.mebaunion.org) to find important notices and forms relating to the Union and our industry. If a Union hall is closed for a national or local holiday, that information will be reflected in that section. You might want to double-check the site before making a hall visit. Many NMC/Coast Guard notices are posted including REC information and Marine Safety Information Bulletins.

Important notices regarding the 2024 M.E.B.A. officers’ election can also be found in this section. **Note:** An electronic version of the Special Election Edition of the *Marine Officer* can be found on the M.E.B.A. website by hovering over the “News” tab on the homepage, then selecting “Marine Officer e-Magazine.”

In addition, you’ll find application forms for Deep-Sea, Government Fleet and the various bargaining units. Also posted are Group Seniority Card application forms, Sailing Time Verification & Transmittal forms and Change of Bargaining Unit Affiliation forms. The M.E.B.A. By-Laws, Constitution and Shipping Rules are there as well along with many other important documents including the Recommendation Form - (*Reminder: two recommendation letters are needed from a Senior officer who sailed with the Applicant for at least 60 days.*)

Please make it a habit to get familiar with that web page. To get there, go to the M.E.B.A. website (www.mebaunion.org) and scroll down to the large “Documents & Member Notices” box on the right side of the main page.

HARBOR PILOT RESCUES SHIP FROM DISASTER

A skilled Tampa Bay harbor pilot’s expertise prevented a cargo ship from crashing after it experienced a critical mechanical failure 200 feet from the dock. On Thursday, the MAERSK TYNDALL suffered engine failure near a container berth at Port Tampa Bay, leaving the ship unable to reverse as it approached the dock. Ken Sears, a veteran harbor pilot, was guiding the vessel laden with almost 100,000 tons of cargo while performing what he refers to as a “routine job.” He said, “honestly, most days, people don’t notice the pilots. You might not know that we’re on board, might not even know the profession exists.”

Sears quickly directed two tugboats to slow the powerless ship, avoiding a potential collision with nearby vessels and cranes. “...I was able to eventually get the ship speed under control and the angle away from the dock to where nothing was in danger,” he said. “It all happened within seconds...” Harbor pilots, often working unnoticed, play a crucial role in maritime safety. “People don’t realize we’re out here every day ensuring ships dock safely,” Sears noted. His swift actions averted a major accident, highlighting the professionalism and expertise of American mariners.

“It's easy for this kind of thing to fade into the background, and it's only when there's a disaster, are we really reminded of what is at stake,” Sears said.

“GOOD JOBS” EXECUTIVE ORDER

The White House issued an executive order, as part of its “Good Jobs” initiative, that prioritizes federal grants for projects that include labor agreements, wage standards, and worker benefits. The order outlines a comprehensive framework defining the key elements of a quality job including effective recruitment and hiring practices, competitive pay and benefits, job security and career advancement, collective bargaining rights, and favorable working conditions.

The order creates a task force, jointly led by the National Economic Council and the U.S. Department of Labor, to make sure the administration fully utilizes existing laws and provides “a clear list of labor standards that all federal agencies should look to prioritize.”

President Joe Biden signed the EO at the Ann Arbor training facility of United Association (UA) Local 190, which represents plumbers, pipefitters, service technicians and gas distribution workers. “Economists have long believed that these good job standards produce more opportunities, better outcomes for workers and more predictable outcomes for businesses as well,” he said. “A good union job is building a future worthy of your dreams.”

AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler hailed the new EO and noted, “Union labor is already building the industries of the future. With this...executive order, government agencies can make sure federal investments in everything from clean energy to semiconductors come with high labor standards for the benefit of workers and taxpayers alike.”

VOTERS MUST BE IN GOOD STANDING FOR BALLOT TO COUNT

Members who are not in good standing by November 15, 2024 (dues paid in accordance with the M.E.B.A. By-Laws through the end of the Fourth Quarter, as applicable) are not eligible to vote in the ongoing M.E.B.A. election.

Members are strongly urged to ensure their dues status is secured through the end of the year to guarantee their participation in this year's officers' election.

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

Friday, September 6 – **Honolulu@1100**

Monday, October 7 – **Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300.**

Tuesday, October 8 – **CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230.**

Wednesday, October 9 – **Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online HQ “Town Hall”**

Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing mebahq@mebaunion.org

Thursday, October 10 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300;**

Tampa@1300.

Friday, October 11 – **Honolulu@1100**

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