**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 39 – September 24, 2026**

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## M.E.B.A. CORE POWER DISCUSS FUTURE OF NUCLEAR-POWERED SHIPPING

This week, the M.E.B.A. welcomed representatives of CORE POWER to the Calhoon M.E.B.A. Engineering School (CMES) for a visit and discussions focused on building partnerships between the maritime and nuclear industries and advancing the potential deployment of nuclear-powered commercial vessels. CORE POWER is a maritime nuclear technology and engineering company focused on developing nuclear propulsion systems for commercial vessels and floating nuclear power plants.

M.E.B.A. President Adam Vokac welcomed in the CORE delegation that included Senior Advisor Phil Malone, Director of Nuclear Engineering Jean Moiso as well as several Nuclear and Project Engineers. M.E.B.A. was also represented by Secretary-Treasurer Roland Rexha, Director of Government Affairs Erick Siahaan, American Maritime Congress Executive Director Elizabeth O'Connor, CMES Executive Director Bryan Jennings and CMES Academic Director Sylvan Haas.

The meeting focused on the opportunities and challenges associated with bringing nuclear propulsion to the commercial maritime sector, including legislative and regulatory hurdles, workforce requirements and the need for appropriate training. The participants also discussed the importance of establishing the U.S. as a global leader in nuclear safety standards for maritime applications.

The discussion follows an August announcement of a federal-private cooperative framework between the Maritime Administration and CORE POWER intended to accelerate the commercial, industrial and regulatory pathway toward a future fleet of U.S.-flagged nuclear-powered merchant ships.

M.E.B.A. President Adam Vokac has been involved in the broader national discussion surrounding maritime nuclear technology. Last month, Vokac represented maritime labor at ATLAS — Atomic Technologies Licensed for Applications at Sea — an International Atomic Energy Agency-led initiative bringing together governments, regulators and maritime industry representatives to examine the commercial use of nuclear technology at sea. More than 600 participants attended the Washington, D.C., forum, which addressed the regulatory, technical, safety and workforce issues that must be resolved before nuclear technology can become a larger part of commercial maritime operations.

The potential benefits being examined extend beyond propulsion. MarAd has identified advanced nuclear technology as a possible means of improving vessel efficiency, reducing fuel costs, strengthening national security and helping revitalize the U.S. maritime industrial base. At the same time, regulators and industry must address licensing, safety oversight, liability, governance and commercial viability before nuclear-powered ships can move from development to widespread commercial service. The CMES meeting brought that larger national and international discussion directly into the M.E.B.A. community. With its investment in engineering education and workforce development, M.E.B.A. is positioned to contribute its expertise as the U.S. considers a new generation of nuclear-powered commercial ships.

**ABUSE OF JONES ACT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

Questions have emerged over foreign company compliance with the ongoing Jones Act waiver's reporting requirements. The current limited Jones Act waiver, in effect since August 17th, has more stringent reporting requirements than the past broad waiver. Under 46 U.S.C. § 501(c), vessel owners or operators are required to file a report with the Maritime Administrator within 10 days of completing a voyage conducted under a Jones Act waiver, and the U.S. Maritime Administration must post that report online within 48 hours of receiving it.

Bloomberg Government has reported that foreign operators have been sailing between U.S. ports under the waiver without meeting the reporting requirements, suggesting the program has become a regulatory "wild west." They identified at least a dozen foreign-flagged vessels, with ties to China and other countries, that transported more than $40 million in petroleum products between U.S. ports without appearing in MarAd's required public reports. MarAd's waiver process also requires a market survey of coastwise-qualified vessels before a foreign vessel can be authorized, with applicants required to explain why the proposed voyage is in the interest of national defense.

American Maritime Partnership President Jennifer Carpenter said that, "it's outrageous that foreign operators are not reporting their movements under the Jones Act waiver. Reporting is specifically required by law, which was emphasized in the U.S. Customs and Border Protection notice of the waiver. It begs the question of what other U.S. laws – like immigration, taxation, and labor – are not being followed by foreign vessels using the waiver. It's time for the Administration to end the waiver, and it's also time for Congress to conduct vigorous oversight of the waiver process."

In addition, MarAd reports indicate that various China-linked shipping interests continue to take advantage of the limited Jones Act waiver supplanting American jobs. But because some voyages go unreported, the extent of China-linked involvement may be greater than the available data indicates. That is especially chilling as U.S. officials recently alleged that COSCO Shipping, China's state-owned shipping company, has used hidden equipment aboard commercial vessels to collect intelligence on military communications along the coastlines of other nations.

Allowing China-linked vessels to participate in U.S. domestic commerce through the Jones Act waiver creates a national-security vulnerability that should not be overlooked. A policy intended to address a national-defense need should not jeopardize our nation's security and hand protected U.S. mariner jobs to a strategic competitor.

**AMC: VENEZUELA OIL DEAL MUST USE U.S.-FLAG SHIPS**
American Maritime Congress Executive Director Elizabeth O'Connor is urging the Trump administration to ensure that oil from its newly announced Venezuela deal is transported to the United States aboard U.S.-flagged vessels, arguing that federal cargo-preference law requires it.

In a *Washington Times* Letter to the Editor, O'Connor said the oil qualifies as "government-impelled cargo" because the federal government holds an equity interest in North American Blue Energy Partners and has contracted to purchase oil at production cost. "The law leaves no room for interpretation," O'Connor wrote, adding that the administration needs "only the will to act before the first shipment sails."

O'Connor also warned that using foreign-flagged ships could undermine the deal's national-security objectives by putting U.S. energy cargo aboard vessels tied to adversarial nations such as Russia and China. She noted that U.S.-flag transportation supports American mariners and shipyards while ensuring vessels meet U.S. Coast Guard, crewing, licensing and environmental requirements.

"The administration calls the Venezuela deal a major achievement for American energy dominance and national security," O'Connor wrote, "but whether that is true depends on how the oil is shipped."

**OSG MOU RATIFIED**
Members recently ratified an agreed-upon Memorandum of Understanding with Overseas Shipholding Group covering 13 OSG vessels including three ships in the Tanker Security Program. Attendees at the regular meetings in October narrowly voted to approve the MOU after spirited discussion and consideration of letters submitted by sailing members in the OSG fleet.

The new three-year Agreement delivers substantial wage gains, strengthens retirement benefits through higher MPB contributions, and fully funds the remaining 1.2% of the Pension Plan obligation without reducing W-2 compensation. Additional gains include improved Chief Engineer compensation, higher vacation rates, better travel accommodations, increased safety reimbursements, the addition of Jesse Calhoon's Birthday as a paid holiday (Juneteenth was also added last cycle), new attack bonuses, expanded onboard internet access, and incentives to advance junior engineers into First Assistant Engineer positions.

Contract talks were headed up by Gulf Coast V.P. Adam Smith and Tampa Branch Agent Nicole Greenway supplemented by rank-and file input and assistance.

**AMMV SEEKS VETERAN DESIGNATIONFOR MERCHANT MARINERS IN SHIPS ACT**
The American Merchant Marine Veterans (AMMV) is asking Members of Congress to add a veteran designation in the SHIPS for America Act for U.S. merchant mariners who have served honorably in U.S. war zones.

In a letter to original co-sponsors of the SHIPS Act, AMMV National President Darin Huggins (who is an M.E.B.A. Captain) called for the designation to be included in Section 606, the United States Merchant Marine Career Retention Program. Specifically, AMMV proposes recognizing merchant mariners who have received service medals from the Maritime Administration (MarAd) as U.S. veterans and authorizing them to receive veteran burial rights in national cemeteries. The current

SHIPS Act includes Section 606 as a program intended to maintain a sufficient Merchant Marine workforce for strategic sealift and national emergencies.

AMMV emphasized that its request is about recognition and status, rather than seeking a new package of veterans' financial benefits. Under current law, merchant mariners have received various forms of recognition and certain limited veteran-related benefits, but veteran eligibility generally remains limited to specific groups, particularly World War II-era mariners.

MarAd continues to award medals recognizing Merchant Marine service during conflicts and military operations, including Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm and more recent operations. AMMV argues that extending veteran status to qualifying mariners who served in war zones would provide long-sought recognition while reinforcing morale, recruitment and the connection between the Merchant Marine and the nation's military sealift mission.

**TELL YOUR SENATOR: COSPONSOR THE SHIPS FOR AMERICA ACT**

Mariners and maritime supporters are encouraged to take a moment to urge their senators to support the SHIPS for America Act and its inclusion in the Fiscal Year 2027 National Defense Authorization Act. The Shipbuilding and Harbor Infrastructure for Prosperity and Security (SHIPS) for America Act aims to address critical shortfalls in our nation's maritime and shipbuilding sectors that have been neglected for too long.

The Navy League's "Rapid Response campaign" makes it easy to learn more about the legislation and send a message directly to your senator. Click this link to support strengthening America's maritime capabilities: Take Action: Support the SHIPS for America Act

**SHIPPING FACES GROWING RISK OF MISSING 2030 CLEAN FUEL TARGET**

The shipping industry is facing a growing risk of missing its 2030 zero-emission fuel target, according to a new report from the UCL Energy Institute and the Getting to Zero Coalition. The fifth annual report tracks the industry's progress toward having 5% to 10% of international shipping's fuel come from scalable zero-emission sources by 2030.

The report points to several areas of progress, including the first ammonia bunkering and sea trials, a 53% increase in ports offering methanol bunkering, and a tripling of methanol-capable in-service tonnage. However, progress has stalled or reversed in other areas. Zero-emission-fuel-capable vessels accounted for just 5.7% of total tonnage on order, down from 9.5% the previous year, while shipping-specific sustainable debt issuance also declined.

The report attributes the uneven progress to a combination of economic and geopolitical pressures, including uncertainty over energy security and supply chains, the crisis in the Strait of Hormuz, and — most significantly — the failure to adopt the IMO Net-Zero Framework last year. That regulatory uncertainty has weakened demand signals and encouraged a "wait and see" approach among shipowners, charterers and investors, making companies less willing to commit to zero-emission vessels and fuels while the future regulatory environment remains unclear. It concludes that the 2030 target remains achievable but says momentum must be regained quickly through adoption of the framework and increased industry and national action.

**TRANSPORT UNIONS ADOPT GLOBAL AI PRINCIPLES**

Transport unions representing more than 16.6 million workers worldwide have adopted a set of principles governing the use of artificial intelligence across the transportation industry. The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) adopted the principles Sept. 18 in Colombo, Sri Lanka, calling for workers and their unions to have a meaningful role in assessing, negotiating and monitoring AI systems that affect their jobs.

The principles call for transparency, human oversight, worker consultation, safety protections, data rights and accountability, as well as a fair distribution of productivity gains from AI. "Workers are the first to see when a system gets it wrong," said incoming ITF President Frank Moreels, adding that unions are "essential to getting it right and improving both operations and jobs."

**ADDITIONAL SPACE IN UPCOMING STEAM ENGINEERING COURSE**

Due to cancellations, the Calhoon M.E.B.A. Engineering School announced that it has additional space available in its six-week Steam Engineering class running between October 12 to November 20.

Applications can be sent via the CMES website (www.mebaschool.org) or emailed to applications@mebaschool.org

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

Monday, October 5 – **Boston**@1200; **Seattle (Fife)**@1300.
Tuesday, October 6 – **CMES**@1430; **Charleston**@1400; **Houston**@1315; **Oakland**@1230; **Portland, Maine**@1200.
Wednesday, October 7 – **Jacksonville**@1300; **New Orleans**@1315; **Online HQ "Town Hall" Meeting@**1300 **(No Voting) – Register by emailing** mebahq@mebaunion.org
Thursday, October 8 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@**1230; **NY/NJ@**1300; **Norfolk@**1300; **Tampa@**1300.
Friday, October 9 – **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. 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*