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## **United We Stand: the Ballast Water Equipment Manufacturers' Association Holds First Annual Meeting and Elects the Inaugural Board of Directors**

*The New Association is Formed to Give a Voice to the Manufacturing Sector of Ballast Water Treatment*

**ALEXANDRIA, VA – April 24, 2018** – The manufacturers and stakeholders in the ballast water treatment equipment market have taken a major step forward by codifying a unified manufacturers' association. The Ballastwater Equipment Manufacturers' Association (BEMA) met on April 19, 2018 for their first Annual Meeting and elected the inaugural Board of Directors. The paramount need for this association arose from the growing demand for well-founded information on the practicability of ballast water treatment technologies, as well as on the technical and environmental aspects of implementing ballast water management regulations worldwide.

Following the announcement of a further delay of the 2004 IMO Ballast Water Convention implementation dates, which occurred at MEPC 71, a small group of dedicated industry insiders gathered in New York City to draw up the framework of what was to become BEMA. The association moved from concept to reality with their first official meeting on March 9, 2018. The attendees at this seminal meeting, made up of representatives of equipment manufacturers, industry stakeholders, and component suppliers from all technologies and regions of the world, voted on and adopted a set of draft Bylaws as well as other formation documents, setting the stage for selecting the organization's Board of Directors and electing the first slate of association officers.

The idea to form an association of ballast water equipment manufacturers dates back many years. "What makes this time different," says Mark Riggio of Hyde Marine who was elected President of the Association and was a member of the initial formation committee, "is the realization that we needed to have a unified voice in the conversation." BEMA will be that voice.

BEMA, a registered trade association based in the United States, seeks to provide coordinated, technical, non-commercial guidance to both the maritime industry and the regulatory agencies that are trying to understand the intricacies of ballast water treatment. The Association will serve as a key resource for ship owners, designers, testing equipment suppliers, and regulators to discuss openly how ballast water treatment systems work and what should be the expectations of each technology operating across a world fleet.

"It has been encouraging to see how enthusiastically the equipment manufacturers have embraced the organization," said Marcie Merksamer, Secretary General of BEMA and member of the formation committee. "We have had a quick and energetic response from suppliers representing all of the major technology types in the industry and from every region of the world. BEMA is truly a global enterprise."

During the initial formation meeting in London, held during PPR5, the organizers discussed applying for non-governmental organization (NGO) observer status at the IMO in 2018. After consulting with the shipping industry and prospective members, their focus quickly turned to ensuring that the association first provides value to the industry and then revisits the effort of obtaining IMO acceptance as an NGO. "There is a lot of value that [BEMA] can provide even before we achieve NGO status at the IMO," said Steve Candito, Ecochlor CEO, member of the formation committee, and newly elected member of BEMA's Board of Directors. "We have already been approached by ICS, BIMCO, and other ship

owner associations to discuss the important implementation challenges. The industry wants to discuss solutions and we are ready to talk.”

Representatives from Cathelco, Coldharbour, DESMI Ocean Guard, ERMA FIRST, Evoqua, Optimarin, Panasia, and Wärtsilä were also elected to serve as members of BEMA’s Board of Directors. The makeup of the Board ensures that the organization has balance with regard to the technologies that are being used in the market, the different regions of the world that serve the marketplace, and companies of different sizes and scope. Riggio reinforced the need for this balance, “Representing the entire market is critical if we want to be a truly impartial, technical resource for the shipping and regulatory community.” The other elected officers of the association are: Vice President Efi Tsolaki of ERMA FIRST; Treasurer Birgir Nilsen of Optimarin; and Secretary Andrew Marshall of Coldharbour.

BEMA is scheduling meetings with numerous shipowner associations and industry trade groups to provide unbiased direction and advice to their membership about the impending retrofit period, currently scheduled to begin in September of 2019.

According to the organizations’ formational document, BEMA will operate with the basic purpose to provide manufacturers and service providers in the ballast water treatment market with leadership and a unified voice. To accomplish this mission, the organization has set forth the following key objectives:

1. Represent and serve as a central, common voice for ballast water equipment manufacturers;
2. Provide the shipping industry with design and operational expertise to balance the directives and opinions of regulators, ship owner organizations, scientific testing networks, and environmental organizations that influence the requirements that directly impact the manufacturers as stakeholders in the ballast water treatment community;
3. Participate at the IMO level and give technical support to all stakeholders as outlined in Article 13 of the BWM Convention by and providing knowledge about the design, manufacture, installation, maintenance, and long-term functionality of ballast water treatment systems;
4. Provide and stimulate authoritative organized research, education and information exchange within the industry and with other industries, government bodies, and interested organizations;
5. Mobilize and finance volunteer, internal staff, and external professional expertise to provide the required range of service to members; and
6. To maintain a liaison to and cooperate with the governmental agencies and allied trade and professional associations throughout the world.

BEMA is actively seeking out new members to join the organization and is actively recruiting members for the newly forming committees of the organization. For a complete list of the BEMA Board of Directors or for more information on becoming a member, please contact the association at [Info@BWEMA.org](mailto:Info@BWEMA.org) or visit their website [www.BWEMA.org](http://www.BWEMA.org).