



U.S. seagoing unions slam plans for shady Virgin Islands ship registry

All of America's leading merchant marine unions have joined together to oppose the creation of an open-registry flag in the U.S. Virgin Islands, describing it as an "exercise in labor arbitrage designed to generate registry fees." If created, the USVI flag would be "the first, and only, international U.S. open ship registry," according to its backers. It would be the fourth U.S.-managed open registry after Liberia, the Marshall Islands and Dominica.

The recently-announced plan would see the USVI set up its own flag, open to vessels of all nations. It would be developed in partnership with the privately-held company that operates the Dominica Maritime Administration, headquartered in Massachusetts.

The new USVI registry, according to its proponents, would offer higher quality assurance than competitors - including American-managed competitors, like Liberia and Marshall Islands, which have lower historical rates of detention on the Tokyo MOU Port State Control list.

The new USVI registry is part of a broader "Revitalization Plan for U.S.

Maritime Trade, Commerce and Strategic Competition," authored by the Center for Ocean Policy and Economics, an organization sharing the Dominica registry's address. The plan's authors suggest that the Jones Act "hinders overseas influence and strategic competitiveness," and that "U.S. laws disincentive U.S. ownership of vessels and the registering of vessels under the U.S. flag." The solution, they suggest, is the establishment of an additional open-registry flag. Existing open-registry flags are unsuitable, according to the authors, because they have "grown too large for true compliance oversight and lack the desire to provide genuine global law enforcement services."

The plan also calls for a new transshipment hub in the Caribbean, with an emphasis on "secure cargo and efficient, sustainable short sea shipping."

The registry's backers suggest that the plan will provide employment opportunities for both U.S. and foreign mariners, but America's maritime labor unions are skeptical. In a joint statement, the heads of the AMO, MEBA, MFOW, MM&P, MTD, SIU, SUP and

TTD said that they oppose the plan "in the strongest possible terms."

"At its core, this proposal, allowing for the operation of vessels with foreign mariners under a United States open registry, is an affront to the American mariners who have always put themselves in harm's way whenever called upon by our

nation," said the unions in a statement.

"The establishment and growth of second registries by other industrialized nations has done little more than decimate their national flag fleets to the point that they are no longer able to provide the requisite military security and logistical support to their flag nations."



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A broad coalition of American labor organizations has responded to the establishment of a flag of convenience open registry shipping regime in the U.S. Virgin Islands:

"On behalf of the licensed and unlicensed American merchant mariners who have proudly and without fail served our country since its founding, we oppose in the strongest possible terms the creation of an open registry in the Virgin Islands, a territory of the United States.

"Open registries exist so that shipowners can increase their profits by avoiding the same rules, regulations, tax obligations and manning requirements that attach to a national flag fleet. This latest effort is nothing more than an exercise in labor arbitrage designed to generate registry fees and to enrich foreign shipowners at the expense of American workers and America's national interests.

"The proposed U.S. Virgin Islands flag of convenience open registry will not benefit the United States nor America's maritime industry, any more than any other second or open registry benefits a national flag country. In fact, the establishment and growth of second registries by other industrialized nations has done little more than decimate their national flag fleets to the point that they are no longer able to provide the requisite military security and logistical support to their flag nations.

"At its core, this proposal, allowing for the operation of vessels with foreign mariners under a United States open registry, is an affront to the American mariners who have always put themselves in harm's way whenever called upon by our nation. Their service, most recently recognized by Congress with the awarding of a Congressional Gold Medal to World War II American merchant mariners, demonstrates a clear and unwavering commitment on the part of American merchant mariners to supply and support American troops deployed around the world, with no regard for their own safety. American mariners believe that our servicemen and women and their families deserve no less.

"The military security of the United States will not be strengthened by relying on foreign owned and foreign crewed vessels. The safety of American troops deployed overseas and the success of their mission must not be put in jeopardy by a reliance on a flag of convenience open registry scheme that utilizes foreign crewed vessels to deliver what our servicemen and women need to do their job in our behalf.

"Finally, if the supply chain crisis has taught us anything it is that we, as a country, must begin to reverse the dangerous reliance we have on foreign sources for goods and for shipping services. Increasing America's dependence on foreign owned and foreign manned vessels will exacerbate the current situation and will not somehow magically enhance America's maritime posture.

"We call upon the Department of Defense, the Maritime Administration, the Biden Administration and the Congress to reject any suggestion that United States Virgin Islands-flag vessels be treated as if they are U.S.-flag and U.S.-crewed vessels for any purpose or for any program. At the same time, we reiterate our commitment to work with the Administration and Congress to achieve a more robust, commercially viable U.S.-flag, U.S.-crewed fleet that will continue to protect America's economic, military and homeland security."

- David Connolly, President, Sailors Union of the Pacific
- Paul Doell, President, American Maritime Officers
- Daniel Duncan, Secretary-Treasurer, Maritime Trades Department, AFL-CIO
- Don Marcus, President, International Organization of Masters, Mates & Pilots
- Anthony Poplawski, President, Marine Firemen's Union
- Greg Regan, President, Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO
- Michael Sacco, President, Seafarers International Union
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USDA helps launch new Oakland box yard for agricultural exports

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is partnering with the Port of Oakland to create a new container yard specifically designed to support agricultural shipments through the port. The agency said it would provide funding to establish the yard as well as financial subsidies for growers using the facility in its latest effort to improve exports of locally grown agricultural products.

The USDA, along with the U.S. Department of Transportation, in December urged the world's leading ocean carriers to help mitigate disruptions to agricultural shippers by restoring reciprocal treatment of imports and exports and improving service. According to the agencies, which threatened the carriers with further examination and action by the Federal Maritime Commission, carriers have made fewer containers available for U.S. agricultural commodities, repeatedly changed return dates, and charged unjust fees that short-circuited the usual pathways while carriers rushed containers back to be exported empty. They also cited the suspending of service to the Port of Oakland, noting that at least one carrier has recently announced plans to resume previously suspended service to Oakland.

At the same time, the USDA says it has been actively developing options to alleviate market disruptions for agricultural producers. Under the new partnership with the Port of Oakland, a new 25-acre pop-up site will be opened in March to make it easier for agricultural companies to fill empty shipping containers with commodities.

USDA will cover 60 percent of the start-up costs, which they said reflects the historical share of agricultural products that are marketed through the Port

of Oakland. The USDA will also help cover additional movement logistics costs at \$125 per container. They also expect the effort will result in fewer unpredictable congestion surcharges for trucks.

The site will provide space to prepare empty containers making access easier for agricultural companies and cooperatives to containers. The new site will also have a dedicated gate with the ability to pre-cool refrigerated shipping containers to receive perishable commodities while avoiding bottlenecks that would have resulted from entering the main area of the port.

USDA estimated the project will cost about \$5 million, and the port stated the initial start-up will cost about \$2 million. DOT and USDA both hailed the effort pointing to the success with a similar pop-up yard opened late in 2021 at Savannah, Georgia that helped to elevate congestion while saying the program could also serve as a model for similar programs to help elsewhere along the supply chain.

The Port of Oakland also welcomed the program as a means of helping it recover from some of the effects of the supply chain on its operations. The port's export volumes fell eight percent in 2021 as shipping lines suspended service and ships skipped port calls to make up for time lost waiting for terminal space at the southern California ports.

The California Department of Food and Agriculture thanked the port and federal government for their joint efforts saying it would be especially helpful with the state's high-value specialty crops. They said that the problems for exports were hurting shipments of California's products including nuts, dairy and produce.

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January 21, 2022

The Honorable Salud Carbajal, Chairman
Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Robert Gibbs, Ranking
Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Carbajal and Ranking Member Gibbs:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our comments on your draft legislation to address the serious issues of sexual assault and sexual harassment aboard U.S.-flag merchant vessels. As the unions representing the overwhelming majority of licensed and unlicensed American merchant mariners crewing U.S.-flag vessels, we have an unwavering commitment to ensuring that all mariners have a safe workplace environment, and we appreciate your efforts to achieve this goal.

At the same time, it is important to emphasize that our unions, individually and in conjunction with each other and with the U.S.-flag carriers, are taking concrete steps to protect cadets and all mariners from harassment and abuse. No one should be subjected to a threatening workplace environment, and no one should fear reporting such incidents so that proper action can be taken against the offending party. To our unions, See Something – Say Something is more than a catchy slogan.

Finally, as restrictions and requirements affecting shipboard employment for American mariners are put in place it is important to recognize that a vessel is more than a workplace for the mariner. Rather, it is also his or her home for months at a time and providing an attractive living environment is similarly important in order to recruit and retain the licensed and unlicensed mariners needed to support the economic, military and homeland security of our nation.

In this context, we have the following comments regarding the draft legislation:

We support the intent reflected in section 2 of the draft legislation providing that a conviction as a sex offender is grounds for the denial of a license or merchant mariner's document. However, we believe the 20-year "look back" component fails to take into account the record and performance of the individual on board vessel since the conviction and may result in an unreasonable taking of an individual's career. The look back for drug related offenses is 10 years. We suggest therefore that the time frame be reduced to no more than 10 years.

We strongly oppose the language contained in 3(a)(c)(1)(B) which allows for the suspension or revocation of a license or merchant mariner's document based on a determination by the Coast Guard "that it is more likely than not that the individual committed sexual harassment." This is an unacceptable denial of due process and creates a situation in which a person's livelihood and career can be taken away based simply on the whim of another party. It is imperative that as Congress acts to protect the victims of sexual assault and sexual harassment it does not do so by allowing unsubstantiated claims or the personal prejudices and opinions of a third party to create another class of victims.

As an alternative to the language in the draft legislation, we suggest that a more meaningful alternative to having the USCG handle the investigations and make the determination of whether or not there was sexual harassment (as opposed to sexual assault) is to extend Title VII applicability to U.S.-flag ships, thereby treating employment aboard a U.S.-flag ship like almost every other workplace in the country. If an individual is accused of sexual harassment under Title VII under a timely filed charge the EEOC would then investigate the claim and if reasonable cause is believed to exist that a violation occurred, it should be referred to the USCG for processing. Unlike the Coast Guard, the EEOC has decades of experience dealing with sexual harassment and as such, the EEOC is the appropriate agency for dealing with the question of harassment. This would mean that the employer would be a responsible party and be compelled to deal with the determination as well as the accused mariner – and the victim would be dealing with an agency that has knowledge about the subject. Of course, allegations of sexual assault, just like physical assault, would need to be dealt with by the USCG.

We strongly oppose the blanket prohibition on the possession and consumption of alcohol as contained in section 6 of the draft legislation. We recognize the role alcohol has played in incidents of sexual assault. We further recognize that the Coast Guard has in place strict standards governing the consumption of alcohol and that U.S.-flag carriers have in place policies relating to alcohol that comply with these standards. We suggest as an alternative to the current language in the legislation that the Coast Guard initiate a rule making procedure to determine if and how the current standards should be strengthened or otherwise changed. As we mentioned, the mariner's place of employment is also his home and to issue a blanket prohibition that affects every mariner in order to respond to the actions of the bad actors is unreasonable and unfair.

We also vigorously oppose section 7 of the draft legislation that requires surveillance cameras throughout the vessel, including on the bridge, in the engine room, the mess deck and recreation areas. Once again, we emphasize that these are not only areas in which the mariners work but areas where the mariners are able to relax, socialize and communicate with their fellow crewmembers, and speak freely about their jobs, their employers and their lives. They should be able to do so in the same manner and with the same degree of privacy as other workers in land-based industries. Most of our deep-sea mariners covered by this proposal live aboard ships for more than half of every year. American mariners should not and must not be subjected to a workplace environment in which their every action and every word is monitored by Big Brother.

To be clear, we understand the need to better protect cadets from sexual assault and sexual harassment while aboard ship. For this reason, we strongly support requiring surveillance cameras (including audio) in passageways immediately


adjacent to the cadets' staterooms.


Finally, as stated previously, we strongly support the principle of See Something – Say Something. We believe that all mariners and cadets should be encouraged to report an incident they witness or of which they have firsthand knowledge.

Similarly, they should be able to do so easily and without fear of retribution or retaliation. We do not however believe that a mariner who fails to report an incident of which he has no firsthand or personal knowledge should be subject to a civil penalty. We would also note that while the draft legislation would impose a penalty on a mariner it does not so the same if a vessel owner or operator fails to report an incident. 46 USC 10104 already requires a Master or other person in charge of a documented vessel to report complaint of a sexual offense prohibited under 18 USC 109(a).

We thank you again for your efforts to address the issues of sexual assault and sexual harassment aboard ship. We share your commitment to eliminate to the fullest extent practical such incidents and to ensure that every mariner and cadet has a safe workplace environment and "home away from home." We would welcome the opportunity to discuss your draft legislation and our comments with you and your staff in more detail at your earliest convenience.


Regards,


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Port of Corpus Christi finishes fiscal year 2021 with record tonnage

The Port of Corpus Christi, Texas ended 2021 with record tonnage, mainly attributable to an 81.2 percent increase from 2020 in shipments of liquefied natural gas (LNG), while crude oil exports averaged a record 1.76 million barrels per day in 2021, a slight increase over its 2020 record performance. The Port of Corpus Christi's new annual tonnage record of 167.3 million tons is a 4.7 percent increase over 2020.

LNG exports fueled much of the growth, reaching 15.7 million tons as the global energy markets continue to recover from the demand destruction wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic last year. In addition, the Port of Corpus Christi saw increases in break bulk cargo such as wind energy components, natural gas liquids, as well as refined products such as diesel and motor gasoline.

The Port of Corpus Christi also saw its best quarter (fourth quarter) in 2021 at 44.3 million tons, besting the prior record from the second quarter, and setting a new high for the second half of the year. From July through December 2021, the Port of Corpus Christi moved 86.8 million tons of cargo, up 4.7 percent from the previous mark set in the second half of 2020.

The Port of Corpus Christi hit an all-time high for crude oil exports in December, exceeding 60 million barrels in a month for the first time in its 100-year history. For the year, the Port of Corpus Christi's 1.76 million barrels per day of crude oil exports saw an increase of approximately 100,000 barrels per day over its 2020 record high. The Port of Corpus Christi accounted for roughly 58 percent of all U.S. crude oil exports in 2021.

The Port of Corpus Christi and the South Texas Coastal Bend has seen more than \$55 billion in private industrial investments over the past five years, an unprecedented level of growth resulting in a vibrant regional economy. Additional investments in infrastructure include the Corpus Christi Ship Channel Improvement Project, which once completed in late 2023 will render the Corpus Christi Ship Channel the deepest and widest ship channel in the entire U.S. Gulf. Work on the project is ongoing, with funding for the final phase pending federal appropriations.

The port continues to diversify its customer and commodity portfolio with new and innovative initiatives, including scalable hydrogen and renewable energy production, as well as a centralized Carbon Capture Utilization and Storage solution for its existing target sources and anticipated new industrial developments coming to South Texas.

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Long Beach approves \$5 million in repairs for *Queen Mary*

The City of Long Beach authorized \$5 million in maintenance and repair of the famed *RMS Queen Mary*. The retired ocean liner, which became a hotel and tourist attraction 50 years ago, is suffering from years of deferred maintenance with the city seeking to address critical issues so that the ship can reopen to visitors possibly by the end of 2022. The ship closed in May 2020 citing the economic impact of the pandemic.

Recent reports have estimated that the *Queen Mary*, which entered service in 1936 and became the fastest ocean liner on the Atlantic, requires at least \$23 million in near-term repairs in addition to \$23 million the city had committed in 2018 to the prior leaseholder for repairs. On January 27, the City of Long Beach Council provided \$2.5 million in its 2022 budget for work to start in February, along with an additional \$2.5 million requested to be presented to the city council in the coming months.

The *Queen Mary* completed 1,001 Atlantic crossings covering nearly 3.8 million nautical miles before being retired by Cunard Line and sold to the City of Long Beach in 1967. The vessel then underwent the first of several significant overhauls.

Over the years, the vessel passed through numerous leaseholders including the Wrather Corporation, the Walt Disney Company, and various smaller companies that fell into bankruptcy in the early 2000s attempting to operate the aging ship. In 2017, Long Beach commissioned the first comprehensive engineering study of the vessel in

years, with the report detailing numerous critical issues and estimating the costs of renovations and upgrades at up to \$289 million. Among the problems outlined were corrosion in the structural steel, an aging and inadequate bilge system, and structural concerns with bulkheads, leaks, and safety hazards.

A subsequent inspection in 2021 reported further deterioration, including the emergency generator was not working and needing replacement, the boilers that provide heat and hot water needing to be replaced, issues with the sewage holding tanks, and electrical issues, warning that the vessel could be in danger of flooding, sinking, or capsizing if the issues were not addressed.

The \$5 million authorized by the city council will address two of the most urgent issues.

The lifeboats, which are reported to be deteriorating in the davits, will be removed. The engineers reported that the lifeboats are putting stress on the side shell of the ship, resulting in severe cracks in the support system. Two of the 24 lifeboats will be retained by the city for future preservation while 13 will be offered to museums and other non-profits that might be interested in preserving them.

The second major project will install new permanent bilge pumps. The city also reports that additional improvements to the bulkheads, emergency generator, and a water intrusion warning system are forthcoming.

The City of Long Beach regained control of the *Queen Mary* for the first time in over 40 years in June 2021 af-

Los Angeles and Shanghai plan world's first green shipping corridor

Following on from the initiative launched at the COP26 conference to create zero-emissions shipping corridors between like-minded nations, Los Angeles and Shanghai announced a partnership of cities, ports, shipping companies, and cargo owners to create a first-of-its-kind green shipping corridor on one of the world's busiest container shipping routes. The partnership, which includes shipping majors Maersk, CMA CGM, and COSCO Shipping Lines, calls for a plan by the end of this year and beginning the transition to zero-carbon fueled ships by 2030 for commercial shipping between Shanghai and Los Angeles.

The first of its kind initiative that lays out a specific shipping route to be decarbonized was led by the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, part of an organization launched in 2019 by 100 of the world's mayors to lead de-carbonization efforts around the globe. The C40 Green Ports Forum, led by the city and port of Los Angeles, seeks to connect port cities and ports around the world in implementing efforts that will mitigate air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions and they were joined by the city and Port of Shanghai, through the Shanghai Municipal Transportation Commission, to form the partnership.

In November 2021, 22 signatories at the COP26 conference in Glasgow pledged to support the creation of at least half a dozen green corridors by the middle of the decade, with an ambition to scale up and expand the scope

of the initiative by 2030. In announcing their plan, they said it was intended to kick-start a market for net-zero propulsion technology in deep-sea trades. The concept is to use a public-private partnership between two major shipping ports to accelerate the technological, economic, and regulatory feasibility of zero-emissions ships that in turn would support the global spread of the technologies.

Under the agreement, the ports and cities of Los Angeles and Shanghai along with the partners set the goal of developing a *Green Shipping Corridor Implementation Plan* by the end of 2022 that will include deliverables, milestones, and roles for the partnership. They envision the phasing in of low, ultra-low, and zero-carbon fueled ships through the 2020s, with the world's first zero-carbon trans-Pacific containerships introduced by 2030 by qualified shipping lines. They plan to develop best management practices to help reduce emissions and improve efficiency for all ships using this international trade corridor as well as for the supply chain and port operations that they hope will become a model for others who follow this initiative.

Other partners joining for this first of its kind initiative include the Shanghai International Ports Group, COSCO Shipping Lines, the Aspen Institute's Shipping De-carbonization Initiative, and facilitators of Cargo Owners for Zero Emission Vessels and the Maritime Technology Cooperation Centre – Asia.



Pictured is a file photo of the *Queen Mary* docked in the Port of Long Beach.

ter filing an objection to the sale of the lease on the vessel and surrounding land as part of the bankruptcy of its last operator, Urban Commons Queensway and Eagle Hospitality Trust. The city had entered into a 66-year lease with the company in 2016 with commitments for renovations for the ship as well as the development of a 66-acre entertainment complex alongside the ship.

More than \$20 million in projects reportedly were identified for the ship, but in a scathing report in November 2021, the city auditor said only seven of the 27 projects had been completed. The audit criticized the city's agreement with Urban Commons saying it failed to address markups and management fees, did not include vetting of subcontractors, lacked competitive bidding for work, and approved purchases beyond the critical work.

The real estate trust set up by Urban Commons reported more than \$500 million in debts in its January 2021 bankruptcy filing, including \$41 million in repair projects for the *Queen Mary* as well as a long list of unpaid fees, taxes, and gaps in the liability insurance coverage for the ship. The U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Delaware in November 2021 called two of the ex-

ecutives of Urban Commons "fraudsters," with accusations that they had "fraudulently obtained PPP (Covid-19 aid) loans on behalf of the debtor without authority and absconded with the proceeds."

Since regaining control of the *Queen Mary*, the City of Long Beach has already taken some steps, including repairs to the electric systems, circuits, and fixtures to restore the lighting of the vessel's funnels. Experts highlight, however, that the 81,000 gross ton liner that has 314 hotel rooms along with restaurants, shops, and her former lounges used for events, conventions and functions, requires extensive upgrades. In July 2021, engineers presented the Long Beach City Council with three options that included investing \$150 to \$175 million for the next 25 years, preserving the ship for 100 years at an estimated cost of \$200 to \$500 million, or retiring and sinking or scrapping the ship for \$105 to \$190 million.

While the ship has rarely made a profit from its commercial operations, elected officials say the city has profited from the lease and the strong economic contribution to the region. Long Beach city officials say the *Queen Mary* has become a city icon worthy of their investments.

Port of Long Beach creating nation's largest electric truck charging network

The Port of Long Beach has issued an information request to assist in creating one of the largest U.S. networks of publicly accessible electric-charging stations for the heavy duty, class 8 drayage trucks that serve the port complex. Transitioning the drayage truck fleet serving the San Pedro Bay ports to zero emissions by 2035 is a central tenet of the Clean Air Action Plan Update, or CAAP, the shipping industry's most aggressive effort to reduce the environmental impacts of goods movement.

The first two public charging stations for heavy-duty trucks in Southern California have been installed at the Terminal Access Center on Harbor Av-

enue and are expected to be available for drayage truck recharging later this month. Providing at least 100 charging stations by 2028 will support the CAAP zero-emissions goal for drayage trucks.

The CAAP is a comprehensive strategy for accelerating progress toward a zero-emission future while protecting and strengthening the port's competitive position in the global economy. Since 2005, the year before the plan was adopted, diesel particulate matter is down 90 percent, smog-forming nitrogen oxides have decreased 62 percent, and sulfur oxides have decreased 97 percent, all while container throughput has increased 21 percent.

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MFOW PRESIDENT'S REPORT



By Anthony Poplawski

COVID MANIA

Matson — Any dreams of the pandemic fading away in the new calendar year were dashed as the Omicron variant wreaked havoc on the dispatch and crew relief process at all hiring halls. Positive pre-employment tests, outbreaks on vessels, ship delays and ship quarantines became the norm over the holidays and in the first few weeks of the New Year. On January 6, Matson Navigation Company issued the following COVID-19 update:

In response to the rapid and pervasive spread of the COVID-19 Omicron variant, and in an effort to advance crew safety and prevent an Omicron outbreak on a Matson ship, shore leave has been temporarily suspended and crewmembers are required to remain aboard the ship while in port.

In addition, the only persons allowed aboard are those who are necessary to keep the ship safe and operational. This includes vendors, technicians, other service personnel, and Matson shoreside personnel but excludes longshore personnel. Those that do board the vessel shall not enter crew living spaces unless absolutely necessary.

The duration of this temporary shore leave restriction is unknown at this time. Matson management will closely monitor the Omicron outbreak and infection rate status in each port and will lift the restriction when safety warrants.

On January 7, the company stated that they would not contest any resulting restriction-to-ship claims in domestic ports, but also requested to suspend all crew reliefs for a period of three weeks to “get past the projected peak of this Omicron surge.” The MFOW rejected this request as it would create chaos in the hiring halls, and registrants on the top of the shipping lists would get aced out of the jobs they were waiting on and would burn their registration cards.

On January 21, along with SUP President Dave Connolly, I participated in a teleconference with Matson labor relations to discuss the problems with shipping during the pandemic and to get everybody on the same page. It was agreed that the parties would adhere to the MFOW and SUP Shipping Rules with the exception of the temporary Honolulu rule that provides for Honolulu reliefs to be flown to the West Coast upon completion of a Honolulu-dispatched mariner's maximum period of employment. The Unions also agreed, however, to take special circumstances into consideration, such as when positive pre-employment tests pop up, and in situations that need to address China COVID requirements and timelines.

The past six weeks have been complicated and frustrating for dispatchers and rank-and-file members alike, but the goal is to keep the ships moving and on schedule so that everybody who wishes to go to work, and who can go to work, gets the opportunity.

Supreme Court — On January 13, in a 6-3 decision, the U.S. Supreme Court reimposed a legal stay that prevents OSHA from enforcing its vaccination Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS). Even though the matter is being sent back to the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals for further review, the conclusions drawn by the Court almost certainly means the end of the ETS.

The primary question before the Supreme Court was whether the scope of the ETS exceeded the statutory authority given to OSHA to issue emergency temporary standards. It then asked the question whether the ETS targeted occupational hazards, or whether it was actually regulating public health more broadly, which would exceed OSHA's authority. While the court recognized that OSHA has the power to regulate COVID-19 risks in environments that may be uniquely susceptible to transmission, it concluded that the breadth of the ETS went beyond clearly identifiable occupational hazards.

The decision led several rank-and-file members to the conclusion that vaccines would no longer be required for shipping. Nothing is further from the truth. Employers will no longer have to comply with the ETS, which means that they will now have greater latitude to decide which COVID-related practices are best for their workplaces. The position of offshore employers is that exemptions will cause undue hardship on their respective operations. Some of the points raised by the offshore employers include:

- Living and working on commercial ships for extended periods pose extraordinary risks for mariners. Mariners live and work in congregate settings, 24 hours per day, sharing quarters and work areas. On most vessels there is a single ventilation system.
- Ships often are days away from any medical care more sophisticated than first aid. There is generally a room on board designated as the ship's hospital, but the room will only contain basic medical supplies. There are most likely no ventilators on board, or anyone qualified to in-tube a patient if there were ventilators on board. There is no possibility of medical airlift when a ship is mid-ocean.
- Even if the ship makes it to a port quickly, there is no guarantee that the ship would be granted entry or that an infected employee would be allowed to leave the ship for treatment.
- Foreign ports set and change standards for arriving ships and may restrict or delay entry due to crew COVID status.

Maritime employers have incurred substantial costs to safeguard mariners and create healthy citadels on board vessels. Some of the costs include mariner salaries and accommodations to quarantine mariners before they arrive on board, PCR COVID tests, personal protective gear and vessel decontamination costs. There is also the loss of revenue when a ship is idle due to quarantine. The bottom line is that contracted ship managers are not in a position to ship unvaccinated mariners to billets and there is no possibility of a reasonable accommodation for a seagoing billet.

GOVERNMENT VESSELS

Watson-class Vessels — In May 2019, Military Sealift Command (MSC) published solicitation N32205-19-R-3009, the successor contract for the operation and maintenance of eight *Watson*-class large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off (LMSR) vessels. The ships are the *USNS Charlton*, *USNS Dahl*, *USNS Pomeroy*, *USNS Red Cloud*, *USNS Sisler*, *USNS Soderman*, *USNS Watkins* and *USNS Watson*. On March 4, 2021, MSC posted a notice that Patriot Contract Services (PCS), the incumbent operator, was given the award. The maximum dollar value of the contract, including the base period and four option years, is \$455,164,762.

On March 24, 2021, the Union was notified that a protest had been filed against the award. On June 1, 2021, the Union was notified by PCS that the protest was moved from the General Accounting Office (GAO) to U.S. Federal Claims Court, in part due to PCS's vigorous defense of the award before the GAO. On January 18, 2022, the Union was notified by PCS that a judge had finally denied the protest and that the award would proceed. Details are forthcoming.

RRF Pay Increase — In 2021, the SIU Pacific District Unions (MFOW, SUP and SIU-AGLIW) provided total labor cost increases for unlicensed personnel to all contracted ship management companies for Option Period 2 (Years 7 and 8) of the National Defense Reserve Fleet/Ready Reserve Force (NDRF/RRF) agreements: three and one-half (3.5) percent for Year 7 (effective January 27, 2022) and a four and one-half (4.5) percent for Year 8 (effective January 27, 2023).

In accordance with the MOU between PCS and the SIU-PD, regarding the terms and conditions of employment for the operation and maintenance of RRF vessels, effective January 27, 2022, there shall be a three and one-half (3.5) percent total labor cost increase in wage and wage-related items and fringe benefit contributions. The PCS-operated vessels include the *GTS Admiral Callaghan*, *MV Cape Orlando*, *MV Cape Taylor*, *MV Cape Texas*, *MV Cape Trinity*, *MV Cape Victory* and *MV Cape Vincent*.

In accordance with the MOU between Matson Navigation Company and the SIU-PD, regarding the terms and conditions of employment for the operation and maintenance of RRF vessels, effective January 27, 2022, there shall be a three and one-half (3.5) percent total labor cost increase in wage and wage-related items and fringe benefit contributions. The Matson-operated vessels include the *MV Cape Henry*, *MV Cape Horn* and *MV Cape Hudson*.

Recommend that the increases to wage and wage-related items are applied to wages and wage-related items, and that the fringe benefit increases are allocated as needed.

MPF Vessels — In November 2020, MSC published solicitation N32205-21-R-4117 for the operation and maintenance of six Maritime Prepositioning Force (MPF) vessels — *USNS Bobo*, *USNS Button*, *USNS Lopez*, *USNS Lummus*, *USNS Stockham* and *USNS Williams*. PCS is one of the ship managers that bid on the solicitation. The bid has not yet been awarded. Will keep the membership informed of any developments.

SASH AND EMBARC

SASH — On January 20, I participated in a maritime labor teleconference to discuss sexual assault/sexual harassment (SASH) draft legislation received from the U.S. House of Representatives Coast Guard and Maritime Subcommittee. The following was agreed to by the seafaring unions in response to the draft legislation:

Section 2 — Convicted Sex Offender as Grounds for Denial

The unions agreed that the 20-year look back language in this provision fails to take into account the individual's record on board vessels during the 20-year period since the conviction for a sexual offense and may result in an unreasonable taking of an individual's career. The unions therefore agreed that the 20-year “look back” should be reduced.

Section 3 — Suspension or Revocation

The unions agreed that the subsection which allows for the suspension or revocation if there is a determination by the Coast Guard “that it is more likely than not the individual committed sexual harassment or assault” is an outrageous and unacceptable denial of due process and creates a situation in which a person's career and livelihood will be taken away based on the whim or opinion of an individual. Simply put, this language creates the distinct and real possibility that action will be taken against a mariner simply because of a “claim.” The unions agreed that legal counsel should look at this provision and suggest alternative language, for example, that action may not be taken absent a preponderance of evidence that the individual committed sexual harassment or assault.

Section 5 — Protection Against Discrimination

The question was raised, that in order to encourage mariners to report incidents, whether language should be added to the section to make clear that a mariner making a report in good faith would be immune from any civil liability.

Section 6 — Alcohol Prohibition

The unions recognize the role that alcohol has played in some sexual assault incidents. The unions further noted that the Coast Guard has in place strict standards governing the consumption of alcohol aboard vessels and most companies have an alcohol policy in place consistent with Coast Guard standards. Reflecting the importance of this issue, and acknowledging the importance of providing mariners with an appropriate workplace environment, on whatever they are employed, the unions recommend that in lieu of this provision Congress require the Coast Guard to reexamine its existing standards and, if deemed necessary, to publish a rulemaking to update the existing requirements relating to the consumption and possession of alcohol aboard U.S.-flag vessels.

Section 7 — Surveillance

The unions agreed that this section of the draft legislation is the most onerous and objectionable. The areas included in the legislation require surveillance in areas not only where the crew works, but where they live, while employed aboard a vessel. Mariners are entitled to a reasonable degree of privacy, including the freedom to speak freely, when in public places, including but not limited to the bridge, engine room, mess deck and recreation areas. At the same time and reflecting the unions' position and commitment to protecting cadets sailing aboard merchant vessels, the

Continued on page 5

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Do I have to step down and fill one of these jobs myself? I don't think the membership realizes what is at stake here.

It breaks my heart to hear from members serving aboard vessels inquiring about reliefs. I remember that feeling all too well. When I was shipping out of Wilmington, I always told Sonny, "If you don't have anyone else... I'll go." I even offered to quit my amazing job down at the shoregang to fill a seagoing billet. Why? I know someone is anxiously awaiting to go home and see the faces of those anxiously awaiting their return.

I also knew that it was my duty as a member of this historical organization

to answer the call. I knew that if I wanted to continue to enjoy all the perks of being in the MFOW, I had to do my part. *USNS Waters, USAV Worthy*, some ship with a sociopathic chief engineer, whatever — I'll go. This is what I expected of myself as a rank-and-file member. Is it too much to ask from you?

Please reassure me that running for office back in 2019 was the right choice. Do it with your actions. Let one of your brothers or sisters come home to their family. Keep this damn job board clean and keep it that way.

Fraternally,
Deyne Umphress

BUSINESS AGENT'S REPORT

Here is the vessel rundown for January 2022:

MATSON NAVIGATION COMPANY

On the Pacific Northwest triangle run: *MV R.J. Pfeiffer* — delegate REJ Travis Kehoe, #3922, one Wiper was shipped for time up. *MV Manoa* — delegate DJU Jefferson Basuel, #3829, an REJ was shipped for time up.

On the Pacific Southwest triangle run: *MV Matsonia* — delegate ERJ Randy Flores, #3962. *MV Lurline* — delegate REJ Dale Cunningham, #3597. *MV Mahimahi* — delegate DJU Rogelio Rivera, an ERJ, REJ and Wiper were shipped for time up. *MV Mokihana* — delegate REJ Frank Selvidge, #3746, a Wiper was shipped. *MV Kamokuiki* — delegate ERO Simone Demich, JM-5321, one Oiler was shipped.

APL MARINE SERVICES

On the EX1 run: *MV President Wilson* — delegate DJU Vicente Cacacho, #3828, an ERJ, REJ and Wiper were shipped. *MV President Eisenhower* — delegate ERJ Jameala Hagens, #3945, an REJ was shipped for time up. *MV President Kennedy* — delegate REJ Ezra Dhillon, #3751, a DJU was shipped. *MV President F.D. Roosevelt* — delegate REJ Randy Fogle, JM-5133.

PATRIOT CONTRACT SERVICES

USNS Sisler — one Wiper was flown out. *USNS Watkins* — one Oiler was flown out and one Electrician is awaiting flyout. *USNS Soderman* — one Electrician is awaiting flyout.

Fraternally,
Bobby Baca

Matson provides aid to Tonga

Last month, Matson announced that it will contribute approximately \$375,000 in goods and services to aid relief efforts for Tonga in the wake of a devastating volcanic eruption and tsunami. According to a Matson press release, a previously unscheduled voyage departed from Auckland, New Zealand carrying relief products and equipment including supplies donated by the company. The vessel *Kamokuiki* was diverted from its regular route between Auckland and China to deliver relief supplies from both Matson and community groups. The special voyage of the *Kamokuiki* arrived at Nuku'alofa port.

"Our hearts are with the people of Tonga as they work to recover from the devastation caused by the eruption and tidal wave," said Matt Cox, Chairman

and CEO of Matson in a press release, explaining, According to the press release, Matson also operates a regular service between Auckland and Tonga's Nuku'alofa port once every two weeks. Matson said that its vessel the *Liloa II* made the regularly scheduled arrival at Nuku'alofa on January 20, and was able to unload its normal load of generalized cargo despite being only five days after the disaster struck. In addition to regular services and the relief mission by the *Kamokuiki*, the *Papa Mau* was scheduled to make two special aid voyages from Auckland to Tonga in February.

According to the press release, Matson is also matching its employees' donations to the New Zealand Red Cross' Pacific Tsunami Appeal fund for Tonga disaster relief.

Divers save coral from Honolulu Harbor Channel dredging project

More than 70 coral colonies and numerous individual corals were moved out of the path of a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) channel dredging project at Honolulu Harbor, days before the project was scheduled to commence. The DLNR Division of Aquatic Resources and a private contractor safely relocated the corals at a cost of \$40,000. The move followed several weeks of last-minute discussions between DAR and USACE over the fate of the corals.

Initially USACE planned to move the corals. But with less than a month's notice, USACE changed course and told the DLNR that if it wanted to save the corals, it could do so, at state expense. USACE considered damage to these

coral colonies, some exceeding five feet in diameter, would be minimal and planned to proceed with dredging the channel without offering any action to move the corals.

The DLNR Division of Aquatic Resources stepped in to save the corals. Contract divers began cutting coral heads away, placing them in an underwater cage, and then relocating them to a recipient site on the opposite side of the harbor. In some cases, they had to break-off corals from live colonies that are on huge live rocks that are as large as five-feet in diameter. The corals were then carefully placed at the recipient location, either using epoxy or in some cases, cement.

MORE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Continued from page 4

unions wholeheartedly agree that surveillance cameras are appropriate in passageways immediately adjacent to the cadets' staterooms.

Section 10 — Requirement to Report

The unions strongly support the principle of *See Something – Say Something*. To this end, the unions believe that all mariners should be encouraged to report an incident they witness or otherwise have personal knowledge of. In addition, the unions believe there should be one central location/number for all reports of sexual assault and sexual harassment incidents.

Nevertheless, the unions oppose the imposition of a penalty on a mariner who fails to report an incident of which he has no first-hand or personal knowledge and which he may believe to be an unsubstantiated claim. The unions further note that while the legislation would impose a penalty on a mariner, it does not impose any similar penalty on a vessel owner or operator who fails to report.

On January 21, the Unions submitted a joint statement to the House Coast Guard and Maritime Subcommittee addressing the above concerns.

EMBARC — On January 27, I joined a teleconference hosted by the U.S. Maritime Administration to discuss implementation of the *Every Mariner Builds a Respectful Culture* (EMBARC) standard, that will enable ship operators to place cadets from the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy and state maritime academies back on vessels. The core tenets of the EMBARC Standards, which call on U.S.-flag shipping companies as well as educational institutions, labor, and mariners to:

- Build and maintain a shipboard culture of inclusion and respect.
- Establish zero tolerance policies for SASH and hostile work environment, zero tolerance for retaliation against anyone who reports assault or harassment, and proportionate responses to policy infractions.
- Eliminate the barriers that survivors, witnesses, and bystanders face in reporting SASH incidents.
- Support survivors, witnesses, and bystanders who report SASH incidents.
- Promptly address any report of behavior that is inconsistent with EMBARC Standards, using every available resource.
- Review all company and vessel policies and procedures to ensure such policies fully support a work environment in which assault, harassment, and retaliation against those who report assault or harassment is not tolerated.
- Implement SASH best practices and commit to adopting updates when such practices are promulgated by MARAD.
- Incorporate SASH prevention, response, and reporting procedures into company vessel safety management systems.

USVI OPEN REGISTRY

On January 26, it was reported that the U.S. Virgin Islands and Northeast Maritime Institute planned to sign an agreement featuring collaboration on the development of the first open U.S. ship registry in the Virgin Islands. The agreement is part of a questionable Revitalization Plan for U.S. Maritime Trade, Commerce and Strategic Competition to support and assist in resolving America's supply chain crisis, ensure maritime sovereignty and security, and revitalize maritime commerce. Highlights of the plan include the formation of the first U.S. open registry, and claim stepped-up development of short sea shipping, establishment of a maritime venture capital fund and other initiatives designed to make the U.S. more competitive as a maritime nation.

The U.S. Virgin Islands is not subject to the Merchant Marine Act of 1920 and the plan seems to have practical and legal hoops to jump through before fruition. While it is uncertain how the application of the first phase of the plan would affect the Jones Act fleet and the respective U.S. mariner workforce, its long-term implications could be deeply problematic. In response, maritime labor (AMO, MEBA, MFOW, MM&P, MTD, SIU, SUP and TTD) rallied to oppose the establishment of a flag-of-convenience open registry in the U.S. Virgin Islands and, on February 1, sent a joint statement to that effect to the media, the Biden Administration and Congress.

HOWZ SHIPPING?

January 2022

San Francisco

Electrician.....	2
Electrician/Reefer/Jr. Engineer.....	2
Reefer/Electrician/Jr. Engineer.....	5
Junior Engineer (Day)	1
Oiler	2
Wiper	5
Standby Electrician/Reefer	14
Standby Wiper	7
TOTAL	38

Honolulu

Electrician/Reefer/Jr. Engineer.....	3
Reefer/Electrician/Jr. Engineer.....	5
Wiper	2
Shore Mechanic.....	6
Standby Electrician/Reefer	28
Standby Wiper	20
TOTAL	64

Wilmington

Electrician.....	2
Electrician/Reefer/Jr. Engineer.....	4
Reefer/Electrician/Jr. Engineer.....	3
Junior Engineer (Day)	3
Oiler	3
Wiper	2
Shore Mechanic.....	19
Standby Electrician/Reefer	19
Standby Wiper	37
TOTAL	92

Seattle

Reefer/Electrician/Jr. Engineer.....	1
Wiper.....	2
Standby Electrician/Reefer	6
Standby Wiper	2
TOTAL	11

MARINE FIREMEN'S UNION TRAINING PROGRAM — 2022

Interested members who meet the Training Program eligibility requirements and prerequisites outlined for each course may obtain an application online at mfoww.org or at Headquarters and branch offices. All applications must be accompanied by a copy of the member's Merchant Mariner Credential, including current endorsements and RFPEW certification.

(a) Eligible participants are MFOW members who:

- (1) Have maintained A, B or C seniority classification.
- (2) Are current with their dues.
- (3) Are eligible for medical coverage through covered employment.
- (4) Have a current Q-card (annual physical) issued by the Seafarers' Medical Center and are fit for duty.

(b) Non-seniority applicants:

(1) Non-seniority applicants may be selected for required government vessels training as required to fulfill manning obligations under the various MFOW government vessel contracts.

(2) Selectees under this provision must meet all other requirements for seagoing employment and shall have demonstrated satisfactory work habits through casual employment.

Training Resources Ltd. Maritime Institute (TRLMI)

Courses are conducted at Training Resources Maritime Institute in San Diego, California, contingent on enrollment levels. Tuition, lodging and transportation are pre-arranged by the MFU Training Plan.

Military Sealift Command (MSC) Government Vessels

This five-day course is required for employment aboard various MSC contract-operated ships and includes the following segments: Shipboard Damage Control; Environmental Protection; Chemical, Biological and Radiological Defense; Helo Firefighting; Anti-Terrorism (one-year validation); Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape (three-year periodicity).

March 14-18 April 18-22 May 16-20

Military Sealift Command (MSC) Readiness Refresher

This two-day course renews the following government vessel segments: Helo Firefighting; Environmental Protection; Damage Control; and Chemical, Biological and Radiological Defense. **The full versions of these segments must have been completed within 5 years of taking the Readiness Refresher course.**

March 3-4 March 31-April 1 May 5-6

High Voltage Safety

This five-day course is open to members who have electrical equipment background and training. Each student should:

- Have the requisite skills (knowledge and techniques) to distinguish exposed energized electrical conductors and circuit parts from other parts of electrical equipment, capability to determine nominal system voltages;
- Have the ability and be capable of providing first aid, including resuscitation, CPR and AED (where provided);
- Be capable of determining the proper use of personnel protective equipment to protect against shock and arc flash.

Prerequisites: Electrician-Refrigerating Engineer/Junior Engineer/RFPEW and Able Seafarer-Engine endorsements.

March 7-11 April 18-22

Endorsement Upgrading Courses

QMED Fireman/Watertender and Oiler

A member who successfully completes the 160-hour Qualified Member of the Engine Department (QMED) Fireman/Watertender/Oiler course will satisfy the requirements needed for the national endorsements as QMED Fireman/Watertender and QMED Oiler, provided all other requirements, including sea service, are also met. **Prerequisites:** 180 days or more of MFOW-contracted sea time as Wiper; PLUS Coast Guard approval letter for endorsement upgrading, which certifies minimum of 180 days' sea time as Wiper.

February 28-March 25 April 25-May 20

STCW Rating Forming Part of an Engineering Watch

A member who successfully completes the 40-hour Rating Forming Part of an Engineering Watch (RFPEW) course will satisfy the requirements needed for the STCW endorsement as RFPEW. **Prerequisites:** See QMED Fireman/Oiler/Watertender course. **It is recommended that eligible candidates schedule the QMED Fireman/Oiler/Watertender and RFPEW courses back-to-back for a five-week combined training session.**

March 28-April 1 May 23-27

QMED Electrician/Refrigerating Engineer

A member who successfully completes the 240-hour QMED Electrician/Refrigerating Engineer course will satisfy the requirements needed for the national endorsement as QMED Electrician/Refrigerating Engineer, provided all other requirements, including sea service, are also met. **Prerequisites:** Endorsements as QMED Fireman/Watertender, QMED Oiler, and RFPEW; PLUS 180 days' of MFOW-contracted sea time while qualified as RFPEW.

February 28-April 8 May 2-June 10

STCW Able Seafarer-Engine

A member who successfully completes the 40-hour Able Seafarer-Engine (AS-E) course will satisfy the requirements needed for the STCW endorsement as AS-E. **Prerequisites:** Endorsements as QMED Electrician/Refrigerating Engineer, QMED Fireman/Watertender, QMED Oiler and RFPEW; PLUS 180 days' or more of MFOW-contracted sea time while qualified as RFPEW.

April 11-15

June 13-17

QMED Junior Engineer

The MFOW Training Plan does not sponsor the QMED Junior Engineer course. A member who has successfully completed the modules for QMED Electrician/Refrigerating Engineer, QMED Fireman/Watertender, and QMED Oiler can be issued the national endorsement as QMED Junior Engineer without testing provided he or she has met all other sea service and training requirements.

QMED Pumpman/Machinist

A member who successfully completes the 240-hour QMED Pumpman/Machinist course will satisfy the requirements needed for the national endorsement as QMED Pumpman/Machinist. **Prerequisites:** 360 days or more of MFOW-contracted sea time while holding the endorsements as QMED Electrician/Refrigerating Engineer, QMED Junior Engineer, QMED Fireman-Watertender, QMED Oiler, RFPEW and AS-E.

March 21-April 29

STCW BASIC TRAINING*

***NOTE: ALL BASIC TRAINING CERTIFICATES HOLD A ONE-YEAR VALIDATION WHEN USED FOR MARINER DOCUMENT (MMD) RENEWAL.**

Basic Training Revalidation (two days)

The BT Revalidation course is designed for personnel who have previously completed a 40-hour Basic Training course and have at least one year of approved Sea Service within the last five years.

TRLMI, San Diego, CA (one day): March 11; March 25; April 1; April 15; May 6; May 20

Cal Maritime Academy, Vallejo, CA: pending

Compass Courses, Edmonds, WA: March 12-13; March 22-23; April 19-20; May 24-25

MITAGS-PMI, Seattle, WA: March 25-26; April 19-20; May 8-9

TRLMI, Honolulu, HI: April 15

Basic Training Refresher (three days)

The BT Refresher course (24 hours) is designed for personnel who have previously completed a 40-hour Basic Training course and have NOT completed one year of approved Sea Service within the last five years.

TRLMI, San Diego, CA: March 16-18; April 20-22; May 25-27

Cal Maritime Academy, Vallejo, CA: March 7-9

Compass Courses, Edmonds, WA: March 22-24; April 19-21; May 24-26

MITAGS-PMI, Seattle, WA: May 8-10

Alabama Port Authority to build intermodal transfer facility

The Alabama Port Authority is going to construct a new inland intermodal transfer facility in Montgomery, Alabama. The port authority's Board of Directors recently approved a \$2.042 million purchase of 272 acres in the state capital for this new facility. The project seeks to extend the intermodal rail services from the authority's container intermodal terminal at the Port of Mobile and in turn support Alabama's regional growth in manufacturing, retail, distribution, and agribusiness sectors.

The project will provide shippers with cost-competitive transportation services to and from one of the nation's fastest growth containerized cargo gateways. Once construction is complete, the facility is set to be serviced by CSX Transportation (CSXT) Intermodal. The project reestablishes regularly scheduled CSXT Intermodal rail services at the Port of Mobile. The terminal operator will contribute up to \$12.5 million towards infrastructure improvements at the facility.

The first phase of the project is estimated to cost around \$54 million and could take up to two years to complete. This will connect inland

Alabama shippers to the seaport's intermodal container transfer facility at Mobile. The Montgomery facility extends the container intermodal assets at the seaport to public and private investments inside Alabama. One example of these kinds of investments is the South Alabama Mega Site where CSX is currently investing \$6 million into rail spur infrastructure to accommodate large scale, advanced manufacturers. Overall, the project is set to generate 2,618 direct and indirect jobs, bringing in \$340 million in business revenues and over \$14.2 million in state and local taxes.

The Alabama Port Authority also recently began the deepening and widening of the Mobile Ship Channel, as part of the \$365.7 million Mobile Harbor project with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers due to be completed by 2025. The Bar, Bay and River channels will be deepened by 50 feet, with additional depths for wave allowances and advanced maintenance. The project also includes the widening of the Bay Channel by 100 feet for three nautical miles to accommodate two-way vessel traffic and other safety improvements.

Biden Administration funds maritime infrastructure projects

On the first anniversary of President Biden being sworn into office, the White House announced a series of investments financed through the bipartisan infrastructure program that was signed into law last year. Within the \$14 billion effort that will fund more than 500 projects, several directly af-

fect the maritime community.

For years, the Maritime Trades Department, AFL-CIO has worked with its affiliates and industry partners to seek a new lock within the Soo Locks complex between Lake Superior and the rest of the Great Lakes to accommodate the largest vessels traversing

the waterway. The administration designated more than \$470 million to complete the construction for the new lock to complement the Poe Lock, currently the only structure capable of handling the thousand-foot vessels.

Much of the media focus on last year's supply chain crisis focused on the ports serving the Los Angeles area. To help alleviate the current congestion and work to prevent future complications, the White House stated it would invest \$8 million to improve commercial navigation within the Port of Long Beach. Included in the project is support for design work to widen the port's main channel, deepen its entrance channel, and build an approach channel and turning basin.

On the Atlantic coast, the admin-

istration will fund \$69 million to improve navigation and expand capacity in the harbor for Norfolk, Virginia. Work will include deepening and widening its shipping channels to improve navigation and enable safer access for larger commercial and naval vessels. Norfolk saw a 67 percent increase in the number of containers moving through its docks over the last 10 years.

In the press release announcing these and other infrastructure-related expenditures, the White House noted, "Modern and resilient infrastructure strengthens our supply chains, supports U.S. competitiveness and economic growth, and protects communities from accelerating impacts of climate change."

HONOR ROLL

Voluntary donation to General Treasury — January 2022:

Thomas White, #3972	\$40.00	Eric White, #3925	\$100.00
Alexander Reyer, JM-5336.....	\$100.00	Anthony Lefebvre, #3750.....	\$50.00
Vicente Cacacho, #3828.....	\$100.00		

Dues Paying Pensioners — End of 4th Quarter 2021:

Norval Ayers, #3440 (P-2665)	Pensioned 9/1/04	San Francisco
Roger Brucks, #3468 (P-2758)	Pensioned 6/1/14	San Francisco
Robert Bugarin, #3505 (P-2756)	Pensioned 4/1/14	Wilmington
Michael Carr, #3550 (P-2718)	Pensioned 5/1/11	Seattle
Bonny Coloma, #3537 (P-2763)	Pensioned 11/1/14	Honolulu
Anthony DeLa Rosa, #3496 (P-2753)	Pensioned 1/1/14	San Francisco
Armando DeLos Reyes, #2231 (P-2541)	Pensioned 4/1/93	San Francisco
Henry Disley, #2147 (P-2617)	Pensioned 4/1/05	San Francisco
Clifford Harris, #3585 (P-2784)	Pensioned 6/1/17	San Francisco
David Madrid, #3591 (P-2816)	Pensioned 12/1/20	San Francisco
Richard Manley, #3747 (P-2783)	Pensioned 6/1/17	Wilmington
Thomas O'Neal, #3546 (P-2769)	Pensioned 7/1/15	Seattle
Herman Richter, #3521 (P-2779)	Pensioned 1/1/17	San Francisco
Anthony Roberts, #3540 (P-2694)	Pensioned 4/1/09	San Francisco
Joe Rubio, #3697 (P-2757)	Pensioned 4/1/14	San Francisco
Walter Washington, #3548 (P-2813)	Pensioned 5/1/20	San Francisco

Lack of icebreaking hampers Great Lakes shipping

A lack of Coast Guard icebreaking assets is hampering U.S.-flag shipping on the Great Lakes, according to the Great Lakes Maritime Task Force. The task force says budget reconciliation legislation now being considered in the U.S. Senate would provide the Coast Guard with funding for an additional Great Lakes icebreaker.

Despite a relatively mild and delayed onset of winter in the Great Lakes, a total of 750,000 tons of carrying capacity for iron ore, coal and cement were delayed, including 20 voyages were delayed for a total of 325 hours.

Even though the *MV American Century* cleared the regulatory check-in point in time to meet the scheduled closing of the Soo Locks in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, it became beset in the St. Mary's River. Coast Guard icebreakers were not able to free the vessel in time for its planned transit through the Soo Locks, which connect Lake Superior to Lake Huron and beyond.

This delayed the down bound lockage of the last vessels leaving Lake Superior, including the *Coast Guard Cutter Biscayne Bay*. Since the vessel normally stationed in Duluth, Minnesota — the *Coast Guard Cutter Alder* — is on the East Coast for an overhaul, there are no icebreakers on Lake Superior during the lock closure. The ice-induced vessel delays forced the Army Corps of Engineers to begin lock dewatering operations a day later than planned.

Typically, the icebreaking season begins on December 15 each year; however, this year Operation Taconite, which marks the official beginning of icebreaking operations in the Northern Great Lakes did not begin until December 29. From December 15 until January 15, the scheduled closure date of the Soo Locks, the U.S. Coast Guard had four of its nine Great Lakes icebreakers in scheduled overhaul, scheduled maintenance, or unscheduled maintenance periods. At one point in January, five of its eight icebreakers operating on the Great Lakes were simultaneously unavailable due to mechanical failures. A total of 68 icebreaking cutter days were lost due to equipment fires or engine breakdowns.

Even though the Soo Locks officially closed on January 15, as of January 27, the last U.S.-flag laker just recently arrived to its winter layup berth. Vessel delays were experienced in ports and in connecting rivers and waterways. In addition to a lack of operational vessels, the Coast Guard is hamstrung by metrics it uses to allocate resources and determine mission performance standards.

The Coast Guard counts 35 ports on the East Coast as tier 1 waterways. They don't consider any Great Lakes port as that important for icebreaking. On the entire Great Lakes, the Coast Guard only considers four connecting waterways as tier 1, none of which are on Lake Superior. The Coast Guard operates 25 icebreaking vessels on the East Coast and only nine on the Great Lakes. The Great Lakes Winter Commerce Act (S.576 and H.R.1561) would require the Coast Guard to report to Congress on its plans to improve Great Lakes icebreaking standards and capabilities.

Lakers need to move cargo in the winter to ensure that stockpiles are large enough to sustain the regions steel mills, power plants and industrial facilities to survive the closure of the Soo Locks from January 15 to March 25. During the closure period, lakers need to make it to their winter homes for maintenance. A few vessels will continue to operate in Lakes Huron, Michigan and Erie.

LOOK FOR THESE UNION MADE PRODUCTS FOR YOUR ST. PATRICKS DAY CELEBRATION.

CORNER BEEF

- > Hormel
- > Thumann's
- > Winter's Premium Deli
- > Harris Ranch

POTATOES AND CABBAGE

- > Dole Fresh Potatoes
- > Purchase cabbage at a union grocery store like Safeway, Fred Meyer, QFC, Albertsons, Haggen or Giant Foods

BEER

- > Bass
- > Beck's

- > Blue Moon
- > Budweiser
- > Busch
- > Buttler Creek
- > Coors
- > Dundee
- > Duquesne
- > Lionshead
- > Mad River
- > Killian's
- > Miller Genuine Draft
- > Shock Top
- > Steelhead
- > Third Shift

WHISKEY

- > Jim Beam
- > Knob Creek Whiskey
- > Old Grand-Dad Whiskey
- > Bakers
- > Basil Hayden's
- > Henry McKenna
- > Old Crow

PARADE BANNERS

- > Is your union participating in a St. Patrick's Day parade? Look for a union printer for your banners and signs on our website at unionlabel.org.



Union-Made St. Patrick's Day



WILMINGTON NOTES

Wilmington Branch members and applicants were dispatched to 92 jobs in January. We shipped six Matson, five APL and four PCS shipboard billets. 19 Relief Shore Mechanics were dispatched. 17 applicants were dispatched to standby jobs. The registration list numbers 23 A-, 11 B- and five C-seniority members. This is the shortest registration list in five years at this port.

Available labor is still a major issue at all the halls. Reluctance and/or refusal to take the required COVID-19 vaccinations to work has cut into our workforce by about 15 percent in this port. I don't know what the stats are in the other ports. I did get a heads up from most who had cold feet with meeting the vaccine requirement. I expected it from some, but also had a few surprises. Some have left, or are leaving the industry and I wish them good luck in their future endeavors.

Through the 30-plus years that I have worked for this Union, I have always encouraged other members to advance themselves and learn as much as they can through on-the-job training (OJT) from our more knowledgeable members and licensed engineers. The knowledge that is gleaned by direct observation and participation is not taught in any book. Fortunately for me, I was subjected to a lot of OJT in my early life, both paid, underpaid and unpaid. In the past I never had any regrets to hang out, assist and learn. This mentality has served me well and I still feel the same way. I would like to thank all the people who assisted me in my quest for knowledge over the many years, and I am always willing to learn more. It has done me good.

The Gang at Pier 300 are still on a

HOWZ SHIPPING?

January 2022

Turn to page 5.

FINISHED WITH ENGINES



Amado H. Brazil, #3525/P-2522. Born August 2, 1927, Philippines. Joined MFOU June 6, 1968. Pensioned September 1, 1992. Died January 20, 2022, Fremont, CA.

Benefits paid during January

Death Benefits

Donald Peterson, P-2636 \$1,502.98

Burial Benefits

Donald Peterson, P-2636 \$1,000.00

Excess Medical \$597.75

Glasses and Examinations \$1,134.00

24/7 schedule with three shifts. Foreman Ken Justice, #3678, is still out on medical and I am not sure if he will ever come back to the shop. Relief Foreman Mike Robles, #3855, is currently running the gang, with a head count of 25 men.

Like many industries, containerized refrigeration is constantly evolving and requires a combination of proper training, OJT and a desire to do the job to the best of your abilities. Our Union needs people who have these qualifications both ashore and at sea.

The *SS Lane Victory* is still looking for a few good men to assist with operations and maintenance. Although it is unpaid, it is a very worthy cause and maybe you will learn something while you are there. Turn-to is Wednesdays and Saturdays at 0900. As always, volunteers are very much appreciated. Don't forget to bring your flashlight.

That's about it. Take care and work safely.

Aloha,
Sonny Gage
Port Agent

Regular membership meeting dates 2022

March	2	S.F. Headquarters
	8	Honolulu
	9	Wilmington
April	6	S.F. Headquarters
	12	Honolulu
	13	Wilmington
May	4	S.F. Headquarters
	10	Honolulu
	11	Wilmington
June	1	S.F. Headquarters
	7	Honolulu
	8	Wilmington
July	6	S.F. Headquarters
	12	Honolulu
	13	Wilmington
August	3	S.F. Headquarters
	9	Honolulu
	10	Wilmington
September	7	S.F. Headquarters
	13	Honolulu
	14	Wilmington
October	5	S.F. Headquarters
	11	Honolulu
	12	Wilmington
November	2	S.F. Headquarters
	8	Honolulu
	9	Wilmington
December	7	S.F. Headquarters
	13	Honolulu
	14	Wilmington

POLITICAL ACTION FUND

Voluntary donations for January 2022:

Judith Moore, in memory of
Jerry Kimball, P-2543.....\$1,000.00
Shadow Moyer, #3822\$50.00
Lawrence Carranza, #3889.....\$5.00
Anthony Lefebre, #3750.....\$50.00
Joe Rubio, P-2757.....\$100.00

MFOU members pensioned

Name	Book Number	Pension Type	Sea Time	Effective
Gary Fortin	3703	SIU PD Basic L/T	24.29	1/1/2022
Andrew Peake	3765	SIU PD Basic L/T	23.025	1/1/2022

HONOLULU NOTES

January was a lot busier than the 62 dispatches that were made. We had the *Kaimana Hila* and the *Mahimahi* coming into port with COVID cases. It wasn't easy mustering up last-minute crew members for these ships. I had 13 pierhead standby and rotary jobs to fill.

Many Honolulu members stepped up to being dispatched at a moment's notice only to be found that they were COVID positive. A little more than 50 percent had positive COVID test results and only one had any symptoms. Not only did we dig into the shoreside maintenance gang, and any member sailing as a Junior Engineer for the Electrician and Reefer billets being called for, but we also went back to members that were pulled from a ship earlier for having COVID that had just finished their six-day hotel isolation.

Many thanks to the membership for pulling together, stepping up and getting these ships crewed up to sail. Presently, 15 A-, 11 B- and six C-seniority members are registered for shipping.

In January, I attended the Honolulu Sailors' Home board meeting. This is my first time as the board's newly elected secretary. For those who don't know me, understand that I'm the least qualified person for this type of work. I will do my best to represent the Marine Firemen's Union in a positive way. I request that all membership wish me the best. Unfortunately, I had to miss the Honolulu Port Council monthly meeting (lunch meeting at Assaggio's) as it was

scheduled on the same day as the Sailors' Home meeting.

After a long two years of trying, the Marine Firemen's Union is back on the State of Hawaii's unemployment union waiver program. From what I've gathered, we left this program back in 2010 and voted it down from being reinstated in 2014. In April of 2020, the Honolulu membership voted to reinstate us into the program, but COVID started. All the unemployment personnel were moved into filling of new claims and nobody was left in the special activities unit to help us get reinstated. But just this month thru some unexpected turn of events, it was finally granted to us.

All in all, this was a tough month. I would like to reprint what brother Brendan Bohannon said just last month:

"Labor is a fight, work, and sacrifice so those that come after us, and our children, can work under the umbrella we construct. So, on it goes. Members cherry-picking jobs for a comfortable ride do not support our Unions' stability and growth but impede us. Take an undesirable job sometimes, embrace and enjoy the absurdity of the situation. Proudly represent your Union in adverse conditions with steadfast resolve. Make money while making your Union strong. Shipboard beefs are not only resolved by the Union officers. All members are responsible to brace the bulwarks."

Aloha,
Mario Higa
Port Agent

SEATTLE NOTES

During the month of January, Seattle shipped one REJ, two Wipers, six Standby Reefers and two Standby Wipers. Seattle currently has 14 A-, three B- and two C-seniority members registered for shipping.

Eight open jobs on the board! It turns out that all my preaching, teaching and begging have fallen on deaf ears. When one job is open, that is one too many! Too many good paying seagoing jobs are on the board, plus a few standby jobs left in the wind, then filled with phone call pleas. I'm shocked at the lack of foresight and union pride being displayed by the membership, because this will come around to kick us all in the ass!

I have had more than one member come in to look at the board, then decline a Diego Garcia ship because "they

have heard those guys don't get a relief and I don't want to get stuck." If anyone can explain the logic and rationale of this position, please come on in and share because to me it's total BS and I can't get my mind around it!

And who the hell are "those guys?" Those guys are you on the next ship because YOU GUYS aren't stepping up to the work the Union has protected on our behalf and are creating a false narrative and relief culture that is unwarranted and dangerous to our Union's survival. In the meantime, our Union siblings languish unrelieved, faithfully doing their duty, with families that miss and love them surely as much as yours love you.

Respectfully,
Brendon Bohannon
Representative

MARINE FIREMAN SUBSCRIPTIONS, AND VOLUNTARY PAF DONATIONS

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