
2023 EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

LAKE BUENA VISTA, FL | FEBRUARY 16-17, 2023



AMERICA'S MARITIME HIGHWAYS & INFRASTRUCTURE

After the landmark signing of the Biden Administration's 2021 infrastructure bill, 2022 saw those appropriated funds start reaching maritime projects.

In October, the Maritime Administration awarded nearly \$39 million in grants to 12 marine highway projects across the nation under the America's Marine Highway Program (AMHP) – which included an additional \$25 million from the infrastructure bill, the largest single investment in the program ever.

“At a time of record demand for goods, it's more important than ever to strengthen our supply chains so our manufacturers can grow and American families can get the things they need quickly and affordably,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg. The funding will help expand marine highway services on the nation's navigable waterways to reduce congestion, alleviate supply chain bottlenecks, and move goods more quickly from ships to shelves.

Since its inception, the AMHP has designated 58 Marine Highway Projects bolstering jobs and local economies across the country. In this round of funding, the 12 Marine Highway Grants were awarded to strengthen supply chains, as well as national security by adding to the nation's strategic sealift resources and providing transportation alternatives during times of disaster or national emergency.

Previously funded projects include supply chain improvements on both the East and West Coast, as well as Guam, Puerto Rico, and along the lakes and rivers. From a new crane in Washington to increasing cargo handling capacity in New Orleans, these projects will have a specific and immediate impact on the nation's infrastructure.

As stated by American Maritime Partnership President Mike Roberts when the infrastructure bill was passed, “We applaud Congress and President Biden for passing a bipartisan transportation infrastructure bill that invests in our nation's maritime ports and inland waterways and supports American offshore wind

development, which will provide greater opportunities to build new American vessels and employ mariners... The critical maritime investments in this legislation further underscore the steadfast commitment of President Biden and the U.S. Congress to American maritime, hardworking mariners, and our nation's crucial cabotage laws, which serve to strengthen our economic, national and homeland security.”

And those are just some of the maritime-specific improvements to the nation's infrastructure. Mariners and their families will also benefit from many other projects set to receive funding from the infrastructure bill, including roads, bridges, transit, rail, climate change mitigation, electric vehicles, clean drinking water, high-speed Internet, resilient transmission lines and more.

America's infrastructure is on the mend, thanks to a pro-worker White House. Now the work, with good paying union jobs, really begins.

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SUPPORT THE JONES ACT

Without the Jones Act, the U.S.-flag maritime industry as we know it today would simply not exist. The Jones Act is directly responsible for countless high-quality Union jobs across the country, ensuring that domestic maritime trade is conducted via U.S.-built, crewed, owned and flagged vessels. This is to say nothing of its other economic and national security benefits, which the Maritime Trades Department has cataloged extensively in the past.

The AFL-CIO even passed a resolution at last year's convention put forward by the MTD supporting the law, in acknowledgment of its value to American workers. Enacted in 1920, the Jones Act is the gold standard for cabotage laws on the books in nearly 90 countries.

However, not all show the Jones Act its due deference. The MTD has observed that you can set your watch to the annual cycle of lies and distortions generated by critics of the measure. Last year was no exception. In the warmer months, critics blamed it for hurricane damage in Puerto Rico; in the colder months, they blamed it for fuel shortages in the Northeast. Anti-worker think tanks, foreign-flag shipping interests, and phony "grassroots organizations" with inexhaustible amounts of dark money to burn crawled out of their cesspools to spew the same slurry of falsehoods.

Just like any other year, the MTD and its allies in the U.S.-flag maritime community fought back. We may not command the vast army of pundits, lawyers, and lobbyists our opponents have at their disposal, but we wield the greatest weapon of them all: the truth.

In Puerto Rico, we demonstrated that the dedicated service Jones Act vessels provide to the Commonwealth is essential to disaster recovery. Our Port Maritime Councils marshaled their resources and aid for Hurricane Fiona victims; American mariners from the island and mainland alike delivered that aid on Jones Act vessels with their trademark professionalism.

Even with the benefits of the Jones Act made apparent in real time, opponents of the Jones Act nevertheless set about their dark machinations. Foreign-flag

operators, eager to circumvent the legislation, orchestrated a political con-job for the ages and ramrodded a fuel delivery from the mainland into Puerto Rico even though a U.S.-flag tanker was available for loading at the same port.

While that operator successfully pressured the government into granting a Jones Act waiver, the steadfast political action of the MTD and its affiliates against this transgression was rewarded in the long run. The 2023 National Defense Authorization Act closed the waiver loopholes those foreign-flag operators abused, thwarting any future brazen attempts to capitalize off a disaster. We applaud the Jones Act stalwarts involved for their comprehensive action against these plainly anti-American schemes.

In November, six New England governors sought a Jones Act waiver in order to obtain “cheaper” liquefied natural gas (LNG) to stockpile for winter. Led by the American Maritime Partnership, the U.S.-flag community quashed this bogus request showing that LNG prices are set at the international level and shipping costs have nothing to do with what customers pay for their home delivery. Those alleging otherwise realize the burden of proof is insurmountable when you’ve cried wolf as often as they have.

As they say, however, necessity is the mother of invention. The anti-Jones Act crowd will not relent from their smear campaign, and will undoubtedly find new gimmicks to undermine the law. The MTD, our affiliates and our Port Maritime Councils will remain vigilant and proactive in its defense of the Jones Act, whose integrity is essential to our members’ livelihoods.

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LABOR SOLIDARITY

Working people in all industries are riding the wave carrying the Labor Movement into the 2020s, a decade that is seeing a resurgence of worker power. Previously unorganized sectors of the labor force are voting for union representation, ranging from university adjunct faculty to video game workers to museum staff.

While the Maritime Trades Department congratulates these workers and encourages our affiliates to continue their bold, innovative organizing efforts, nevertheless we take pause to acknowledge the progress yet to be made. In many cases, Union brothers and sisters are embroiled in labor actions against unfair and greedy employers whose prevailing strategy is to wear down their workers through wars of attrition.

First and foremost in the MTD's thoughts are those brave Mine Workers about to enter their third year striking against Warrior Met Coal. To say that their resolve is inspiring would be a colossal understatement. The United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) members in Alabama have been on the receiving end of every dirty trick in the book: scab labor, court injunctions, and even an unprecedented (and, thankfully, quickly reversed) NLRB decision that threatened to hold the workers liable for the company's loss of profits during the strike. No matter what disgraceful tactics Warrior Met and its Wall Street masters have thrown at them, the Mine Workers have held the line. The MTD pledges its unwavering support to the UMWA members at Warrior Met in hopes that 2023 will finally be the year they emerge victorious.

In Pittsburgh, News Guild members affiliated with the Communications Workers of America, as well as Teamsters, have been on strike against the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* since October. Workers had had enough after no raises for 15 years and ownership proposing reductions in healthcare. Strike supporters are cancelling their subscriptions and withholding advertisements while the workers attempt to negotiate with the billionaire family that owns the paper. Again, the MTD pledges its support to these brave sisters and brothers.

These are merely two of countless examples of workers in need of solidarity. Across the country, MTD affiliated unions have hit the bricks and very often

returned to work with better and stronger contracts. The MTD reiterates its support for all workers fighting for better working conditions, wages, and benefits. The years ahead undoubtedly have many challenges and surprises in store for the Labor Movement. All true supporters of Labor should prepare themselves to rush to the defense of our Union brothers and sisters at a moment's notice.

The MTD offers some additional words of caution: We acknowledge and, in many cases, celebrate the diversity of opinions and lifestyles within Organized Labor. Nevertheless, it behooves all of us to remember that the bosses' favorite strategy has been to exploit those differences to fracture our solidarity.

In particular, it dismays the MTD to see how so-called "culture war" issues have been used to erode the public support and bargaining power of workers such as government employees and teachers. We urge our affiliates and their members to think long and hard any time politicians or the media disparage working people before accepting those claims as truth.

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LEGISLATIVE WINS FOR MARITIME

For practical reasons that happen to be consistent with our collective makeup, the MTD, our affiliates and our Port Maritime Councils spend significantly more time looking forward rather than lingering in the rear-view mirror.

Occasionally, though, we help secure victories that absolutely warrant second looks. Components of the most recent National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) along with the Consolidated Appropriations Act fit this category.

Among other bipartisan achievements, these annual bills provide full funding for vital U.S.-flag maritime packages including the Maritime Security Program and the much newer Cable Security Fleet and Tanker Security Program. Increased funding also is provided for U.S. food-aid programs, the primary source of such cargoes for American-flag ships.

But wait, there's more.

The bills also feature new safeguards for the Jones Act and cargo preference; imminent expansion of the Tanker Security Program; funding for badly needed studies pertaining to U.S.-flag fleet growth; dollars to upgrade the Soo Locks; largely sensible improvements for promoting maritime workplace safety; rules to facilitate the entry of military veterans into civilian maritime jobs; and renewed examination of methods to reduce Coast Guard backlogs for merchant mariner credential processing.

There are other positive sections, too, including one that provides for initial steps towards modernizing the U.S. Ready Reserve Force, a key part of America's national defense capabilities.

And, the NDAA includes the following statement: "It is the sense of Congress that the United States Merchant Marine is a critical part of the national infrastructure of the United States, and the men and women of the United States Merchant Marine are essential workers."

Brothers and sisters, you'd better believe we'll keep that quote handy.

All of those achievements underscore the never-ending need for grassroots political action. Many, many months' worth of work went into these pieces of legislation, and it's no exaggeration to state that the MTD, our affiliates and our Port Councils deservedly share in the credit for these results.

As do the U.S.-flag industry and the many pro-maritime, pro-worker legislators from both sides of the aisle, as well as the Biden administration. Whatever one's personal political views, there is simply no questioning this administration's outstanding support for American maritime. The National Defense Authorization Act and the Consolidated Appropriations Act are the latest examples of that backing.

So much for the past. Already the MTD, our affiliates, our Port Councils and our allies are looking at measures to keep the U.S.-flag fleet vital for decades to come.

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PROTECT THE NLRB

Last December, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) received almost \$300 million in the 2023 Omnibus Bill. This earmark resolved a multiyear budget shortfall, enabling the agency to effectively adjudicate on labor disputes. The Labor Movement fought for and rightly celebrated the legislation's passage, while acknowledging the larger war over the agency's future has yet to be won.

While a 9 percent increase may sound substantial, it is barely sufficient to cover the NLRB's rapidly expanding work load. The surge of labor activity precipitated by the COVID-19 pandemic is reflected in the number of new cases the NLRB has to handle. In 2022, that number increased 23 percent – the largest single year increase since 1976. Union representation petitions also increased 53 percent over the course of the year, while the number of unfair labor charges went up by 19 percent. The current composition of the Board is sympathetic to Labor's needs more often than not, which only increases the urgency to secure adequate and needed funding.

To add to the agency's woes, the NLRB also has faced a dramatic staffing shortage. The number of employees at the NLRB dropped 39 percent during the last 20 years, with some field offices operating at half their prescribed staff. While the budget increase has prevented employee furloughs, it quite simply is not enough to hire and retain the talent necessary to keep the agency in working order.

The 118th Congress was called to order only weeks following the passage of the 2023 Omnibus, and its priorities regarding the NLRB are anything but clear.

The Maritime Trades Department urges our affiliates and Port Maritime Councils to apply maximum political pressure on Congress to ensure that the NLRB continues to receive much-needed funding to do its mandated job.

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RECRUITING & ORGANIZING

Have you seen any “help wanted” signs lately?

The data behind what sometimes has been called the “Great Resignation” quantifies the related challenges and also helps explain why there isn’t a simple solution.

Recent data from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce shows there are more than 10 million job openings in the U.S. but only around six million unemployed workers. Pardon our firm grasp of the obvious, but this means that if everyone who wanted to work did in fact find a job, there would still be four million openings.

Additional data shows that there are three million fewer Americans participating in today’s workforce compared to three years ago.

Formal surveys have found various reasons for that drop-off. They include remaining out of the workforce in order to provide care for children or other family members; addressing their own health challenges; and (surprise, surprise) being turned off by inadequate pay across much of what is sometimes called the “service economy.”

While there isn’t a once-size-fits-all answer, let’s start with the words of the late MTD Executive Secretary-Treasurer Frank Pecquex. During a previous worker shortage, Frank said the solution is encapsulated in the following sentiment: “I’ll shovel poop if you pay me \$50 an hour.”

It’s a lot easier to attract and retain good employees when they are offered fair pay, good benefits – and union representation. As we all know, year after year, union members consistently average higher pay and better benefits than their unrepresented counterparts, which is a big reason why, even though the Great Resignation is affecting us, too, we’re not always feeling the worst of it.

The same government data shows that, during the pandemic reshuffling, jobs that require in-person attendance and traditionally have lower wages have had

a more difficult time retaining workers. For example, the leisure and hospitality industry has had the highest quit rate since July 2021. The quit rate for the retail trade industry isn't far behind.

The way to move forward is by repairing America's broken labor laws and organizing more workers. We know that employers for decades have used both legal and illegal tactics to stymie organizing efforts, resulting in stagnant wages, rising inequality, race- and gender-based discrimination, a weakened labor movement and a democracy under attack. No challenge we face is more serious than the need to make the promise of union membership a reality for unorganized workers.

The opportunities for success are out there. Concurrent with people re-examining their views about specific jobs and workplaces, there is a new energy across the country fueled by young workers who are standing up and fighting for rights and a voice on the job. These workers, relatively new to the workforce and labor movement, are fighting back against economic injustice, and leading a novel wave of the movement with levels of enthusiasm and commitment in paralleled in decades.

Although not many workers ages 24 and younger have collective bargaining representation, their support for unions and zeal for collective action is unmistakable. Recent polls show that the vast majority of young workers – 77% of those ages 18–34 – support unions.

That's just one snapshot from a larger collage of surveys showing an overall backing of unions that's unprecedented in modern times.

Brothers and sisters, not all "help wanted" signs are created equal. But when more and more of them become associated with good wages, decent benefits and all the protections that come with carrying a union card, everyone will win, and the jobs will be much easier to fill.

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SAFE WORKPLACES

The Maritime Trades Department remains committed to helping ensure safe workplaces for everyone, both at sea and ashore, regardless of occupation.

In that spirit, the MTD, our affiliates and our Port Maritime Councils constantly work together with fellow labor organizations, contracted employers, military personnel, government agencies and politicians at every level of government to support and protect all workers.

One such outreach involves preventing sexual assault and sexual harassment – abbreviated as SASH – through the implementation of the “Every Mariner Builds a Respectful Culture” or EMBARC program. Though it’s still in its early stages, we are committed to the program’s use and success throughout the American maritime industry.

Key components of the most recently enacted National Defense Authorization Act focus on SASH prevention. The MTD and many of our affiliates played vital roles in finalizing the specifics of that bill. As with any other challenge, we didn’t wait around when SASH concerns surfaced. We worked to find and apply solutions.

Anyone who has sailed can tell you how important safety at sea is, to both mariners and the companies that employ them. Protecting mariners from unwanted sexual advances and comments should be taken as seriously as protecting them from workplace injuries or accidents. A mariner’s job is hard enough without the risk of sexual harassment or assault while in the workplace.

But the truth is, mariners don’t need to wait on guidelines, regulations or legal requirements being instituted to teach us how to be good shipmates, good co-workers and good people. These “best practices” are as easy to understand as they are to live by:

- Consider if your words might be hurtful to others,
- Treat others as you would want to be treated,
- Maintain a respectful shipboard and shore-leave culture,
- Create a safe and professional working environment,
- Think about how your actions might be perceived by others, and
- Speak up if you see a shipmate acting in an unprofessional manner towards another member of the crew.

These same sentiments apply with shoreside jobs as well.

As professionals, we will continue treating everyone at sea and ashore with respect and civility, and will encourage everyone to do the same.

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SUPPORT OUR TROOPS & VETERANS

Many of our affiliates are part of America's fourth arm of defense, so it is not surprising that we enthusiastically back United States and Canadian military veterans and those who currently serve.

It is worth noting that, in many cases, we are supporting our own. More than 1.6 million union members are veterans of military service, not to mention the numerous retired trade unionists who wore their nations' uniform.

Foremost in our hearts are the U.S. Merchant Mariners of World War II, who last year received long-overdue recognition in the form of the Congressional Gold Medal. Those veterans, part of the Greatest Generation, made the difference in securing our freedom.

Of course, supporting the troops and veterans is about much more than words and ceremonies, however sincere. That's why the MTD and many of our affiliates are part of the Union Veterans Council, an AFL-CIO constituency organization dedicated to promoting and protecting the wellbeing of those who served. It is also why the MTD, our affiliates and our Port Maritime Councils have worked for many years to secure good, family-wage jobs for our veterans after separating from service. Part of that effort has been channeled directly toward the successful Military to Maritime program, which makes it easier for veterans with qualifying sea service to land jobs in the U.S. maritime industry.

As for supporting today's armed forces, we do it every day – aboard vessels, in shipyards or in related capacities. In some cases, we even work side-by-side with the women and men in uniform, thanks to MTD-backed programs that are vital to national, economic and homeland security.

The MTD, our affiliates and our Port Councils fully support our nations' troops and veterans and will continue to prioritize – through the Union Veterans Council and other grassroots vehicles – the issues that matter most to them and their families.

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WIND ENERGY

The future is coming, and in the energy sector, that future is windfarms. These clean, efficient power sources will soon be a fixture of the American power grid, the men and women of the maritime industry are proud to be at the forefront of this development.

The Jones Act – America’s freight cabotage law – applies to transportation to and from the Outer Continental Shelf. This is where our Building Trades brothers and sisters will build offshore windfarms.

Language included in the 2021 National Defense Authorization Act, which called for offshore windfarm development to be covered by the cabotage law, as well as an Executive Order issued by President Joe Biden, support that statement in black and white.

As MTD President Michael Sacco is fond of saying, “It’s all about jobs, jobs, jobs!” These wind turbine installations will create thousands of American jobs for years to come – from domestic shipyards for vessels that will carry materials and workers to shoreside fabrication facilities to the actual construction and maintenance of the turbines. And the Maritime Trades is working with the Building Trades, Metal Trades and Transportation Trades departments to make these union jobs.

The U.S.-flag maritime industry has acted together with several responsible, technologically advanced companies in the wind market to plan for this future. These partners can see the clear value that well-trained American mariners bring to the table. The maritime industry is a vital component of windfarm construction plans.

Windfarms are spreading all along the Northeast coast, with many more being planned as far south as Florida and the Gulf of Mexico. Sites also are being considered and developed on the West Coast, as well as in the Great Lakes. As long as our industry partners remain committed to creating safe, good-paying union jobs, we look forward to adapting to the wind energy industry.

The MTD saw into this future in 2009 with a convention resolution urging Congress to make sure “that the development and operation of offshore renewable energy facilities will benefit American workers and American companies constructing and servicing such facilities.” With wind energy and mariners working side by side with the sisters and brothers in the various Trades, the future is bright, clean, sustainable – and union made.

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SUPPORT CARGO PREFERENCE

Cargo preference laws have benefited the United States for more than a century. These regulations ensure that a portion of the goods bought and paid for with taxpayer dollars are transported on American ships with American crews.

Cargo preference laws create good-paying jobs for American workers, provide tax revenues at the local, state, and federal levels, and make sure America's merchant marine remains ready and available when needed for strategic sealift and other defense interests.

Preference cargoes typically include military items, food aid, and shipments generated by the U.S. Export-Import Bank. There are corresponding percentage requirements that specify how much of the cargo must be moved aboard U.S.-flag vessels, ranging from 50 to 100 percent.

Despite a long history of bipartisan support, cargo preference laws have been under fierce attack from a variety of opponents who are out to slash the percentage of food aid cargoes U.S.-flag vessels can transport. Additionally, the base of government-generated cargoes in recent years has declined significantly for most civilian agency materials, and even Defense-related items have waned.

Further, contracting officers in most "shipper" agencies, such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Agency for International Development, are under enormous institutional pressures to reduce budgets, with transportation costs often a target.

Finally, there have been instances in which government-generated cargoes are moved on foreign-registered (and foreign-crewed) vessels because there was not an appropriate U.S.-flag ship available.

Fortunately, the U.S. flag-fleet has an unwavering ally in President Joe Biden. During his presidential campaign, he included the Jones Act and other maritime specific programs into his economic platform, and personally assured maritime unions of his support.

Additionally, U.S. Maritime Administrator Ann Phillips (Rear Admiral, USN, Ret) last year announced two efforts that were meant to support federal compliance with cargo preference requirements.

Phillips, during September 2022 testimony before the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation stated that the Maritime Administration (MarAd) issued a Request for Information to solicit input from all stakeholders on cargo preference requirements. The administrator also announced that MarAd will resume publishing comprehensive federal cargo preference data. Publication of the data is intended to increase interagency efficiency and to provide transparency regarding the movement of government-impelled cargo on both U.S.-flagged and foreign-flagged vessels.

Under current federal cargo preference law, the Department of Defense must move 100 percent of its cargoes on U.S.-flagged vessels. Generally, departments and agencies outside of the Department of Defense must ship at least 50 percent of the gross tonnage of the equipment, materials, or commodities that they transport on U.S.-flagged vessels.

MarAd is also working with the Biden-Harris Administration's Made In America Office to help agencies understand cargo preference requirements.

Following a September hearing, U.S. Rep. John Garamendi (D-CA) introduced the bipartisan "Rebuilding the United States-Flag International Fleet Act" (H.R.9102), with Rep. Bob Gibbs (R-OH) and Rep. Alan S. Lowenthal (D-CA). The bill would essentially reverse a misguided 2012 measure by restoring the requirement that at least 75% of gross tonnage of seaborne cargo for international food aid programs be carried on U.S.-flag vessels (the requirement is currently at 50%).

Although Garamendi's bill hasn't gotten much traction in Congress, the fight to preserve and fully implement the Cargo Preference Act will continue. Proponents vow to forge ahead until MarAd ultimately gets all the tools that it sorely needs in the unrelenting fight to maintain – and grow – the U.S.-flag fleet.

The MTD and our affiliates salute President Biden for his support and pledge to continue our fight to protect cargo preference, and all associated components.

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EXPORT-IMPORT BANK

Sometimes overlooked and often misunderstood, the U.S. Export-Import Bank nevertheless is a crucial source of good jobs for American workers. It's also a money-maker for the government, which is among the reasons it has traditionally enjoyed bipartisan support.

While the lender has experienced issues recently with funding and director vacancies, the Ex-Im Bank has been able to reach a quorum of board members since May 2019. In that time, the bank has resumed its primary duty: backing low-interest loans for the export of U.S.-made goods. The goods generated by the bank are carried on American-flag ships, which means jobs for mariners, and support for the nation's cargo preference laws.

Founded in 1934, the bank helps maintain good American jobs, and generates significant money for the U.S. Treasury. It's an independent federal agency which, according to its mission statement, "promotes and supports American jobs by providing competitive and necessary export credit to overseas purchasers of U.S. goods and services. A robust Ex-Im can level the global playing field for U.S. exporters when they compete against foreign companies that receive support from their governments. Ex-Im also contributes to U.S. economic growth by helping to create and sustain hundreds of thousands of jobs in exporting businesses and their supply chains across the United States. In recent years, 90 percent of the total number of the bank's authorizations has directly supported small businesses. Since 2000, Ex-Im has provided \$14.8 billion to the U.S. Treasury after paying for all of its administrative and program expenses."

The U.S. is not alone in providing export credit to domestic shipping companies: more than 60 other nations use similar institutions to promote their goods for export around the world. But as with other political scrapes involving laws and programs that boost the U.S. Merchant Marine, our work in raising awareness on the vital nature of the Ex-Im Bank is never finished.

As stated by Jeffrey D. Gerrish, former Ex-Im Bank Chairman and President, "With Ex-Im restored to full functionality, our exporters again have a fighting chance to win export sales on the fair basis of quality and price instead of on the availability of government-backed financing."

The MTD fully supports the Ex-Im Bank and looks forward to its ongoing success.

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HURRICANE RELIEF FOR PUERTO RICO & FLORIDA

The 2022 hurricane season will be remembered as one of the worst in recent history. Hurricane Fiona made landfall in Puerto Rico on September 18th, leading to an island-wide blackout, catastrophic flash flooding, and widespread water shortages. Hurricane Ian slammed into Florida a little over a week later, becoming the deadliest, most destructive weather disaster on the mainland United States since Hurricane Katrina.

The Maritime Trades Department was floored by the scope of devastation. Working people all over the affected areas were without electricity, food, water, or medical care. Despite the profound grief, the MTD did not stand idly by as tragedy unfolded. Instead, our Port Maritime Councils made plans and leapt into action.

Working in concert with the Puerto Rico and Florida AFL-CIOs, they collected aid, raised money, and even put boots on the ground to distribute relief where the storms hit hardest. We particularly commend the Greater South Florida Maritime Trades Council and the Puerto Rico Ports Maritime Council for their swift and selfless action. Additionally, the Delaware Valley and Vicinity Port Maritime Council and the West Gulf Ports Council loaded containers with goods donated by their local unions. One need only look at these councils to understand what the MTD means when it says our Port Maritime Councils are anchors in their communities.

While the distribution of emergency supplies may have wrapped up, the years-long work of rebuilding has only just begun. However, this task carries with it a note of optimism. As Albert Einstein once said, “In the midst of every crisis, there lies great opportunity.” We have a chance to make these communities even more resilient than ever before, so they can better withstand the extreme weather events of the future.

The Labor Movement can play a central role in that process. After all, the emergency aid for Puerto Rico arrived on the island aboard union-crewed, Jones Act vessels. High-quality union jobs, in tandem with project labor agreements and other pro-labor legislation, will provide workers with more money to take

care of their families and to circulate in their local economies. With increased investment and greater resilience, those communities stand to thrive in ways previously unimaginable.