

Headlines:

White House – Arctic Region Strategic Implementation Plan;
Gulf of Mexico – loss of well control;
Great Lakes – dry cargo residue discharge;
Baltimore – safety zone for ice conditions;
SHC – comments sought on PPR;
MTSNAC – meeting;
EPA – VGP webinars;
NTSB – sinking of OSV;
MARAD – funds for maritime academies;
FMC – Explorer of the Sea notice;
NOAA – Carib Tails;
NOAA – illegal importation of piranhas;
IMO – draft Polar Code;
EU NAVFOR – suspected pirates transferred to Seychelles; and
New Zealand – SeaCert.

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Bryant's Maritime News

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*Note: This newsletter is one section of the **Bryant's Maritime Consulting** website. Visit the site for more extensive maritime regulatory information. Individual concerns may be addressed by retaining **Dennis Bryant** directly. Much of the highlighted text in this newsletter constitutes links to Internet sites providing more detailed information. Links on this page may be in PDF format, requiring use of Adobe Acrobat Reader. Comments on these postings are encouraged and may be made by email to the editor or by going to the blog page on the website and clicking the envelope that appears at the end of each posting. Be aware that the daily newsletter is a single posting, even though it contains a number of individual items. Every new beginning begins with a tenuous first step.*

White House – Arctic Region Strategic Implementation Plan



The White House released the **Implementation Plan** for the National Strategy for the Arctic Region. The Plan provides guidelines for federal departments and agencies to execute the National Strategic for the Arctic Region. It is designed to meet the reality of a changing Arctic and uphold interests in safety and security, protect the environment, and work with international partners. (1/30/14).

Gulf of Mexico – loss of well control



The Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE) issued a [press release](#) stating that it and the US Coast Guard are responding to a loss of well control at a jack-up rig in the Gulf of Mexico 108 miles off the Louisiana coast. The operator reported that the well began to flow natural gas. The flow has been diverted overboard and work continues to shut-in the well. No injuries have been reported. Personnel are being evacuated. No sheen has been reported. (1/30/14).

Great Lakes – dry cargo residue discharge



The US Coast Guard promulgated a final rule regarding dry cargo residue (DCR) discharges into waters of the Great Lakes. The new regulation will continue to allow bulk discharges of non-hazardous and non-toxic DCR in limited areas of the Great Lakes. However, vessel owners and operators will be required to minimize DCR discharges using methods documented in their DCR plans. The regulation will prohibit limestone and clean stone DCR discharges in some waters where they are currently permitted. The new regulation comes into effect on 3 March. [79 Fed. Reg. 5261](#) (January 31, 2014).

Baltimore – safety zone for ice conditions



The US Coast Guard has established, through 15 April, a temporary safety zone on waters of the Captain of the Port (COTP) Zone Baltimore due to ice conditions. Vessels may only transit the zone with the prior permission of the COTP. [79 Fed. Reg. 5283](#) (January 31, 2014).

SHC – comments sought re PPR



The Shipping Coordinating Committee (SHC), sponsored by the Department of State (DOS), solicits comments regarding the upcoming meeting of the IMO Sub-Committee on Pollution Prevention & Response (PPR). The SHC meeting scheduled for 21 January was cancelled due to inclement weather. Comments should be submitted by 7 February. [79 Fed. Reg. 5510](#) (January 31, 2014).

MTSNAC – meeting



The Maritime Transportation System National Advisory Council (MTSNAC), sponsored by the Maritime Administration (MARAD) will meet in Washington, DC on 13 February. [79 Fed. Reg. 5518](#) (January 31, 2014).

EPA – VGP webinars



The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a [notice](#) stating that it will conduct two webinars in the near future on its vessel general permit (VGP) program. The focus of the first webinar, on 6 February, will be sample collection and analysis monitoring requirements. The second webinar, on 14 February, will focus on environmentally acceptable lubricants. (1/30/14).

NTSB – sinking of OSV



The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) issued the report of its investigation of the sinking of offshore supply vessel Ricky B in the Gulf of Mexico on 30 May 2013. The probable cause of the casualty was the crew's failure to adequately assess the severity of the flooding through the starboard shaft seal gland and take prudent action to mitigate the situation. [MAB 14/01](#) (1/29/14).

MARAD – funds for maritime academies



The Maritime Administration (MARAD) issued a [news release](#) stating that the US Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA) and the six state maritime academies will each receive \$1 million from the government program that recycles obsolete government vessels. (1/29/14).

FMC – Explorer of the Seas notice



The Federal Maritime Commission (FMC) issued a [news release](#) stating that Royal Caribbean International released a [statement](#) with information on refunds and reimbursements for passengers affected by the recent cruise of the ship Explorer of the Seas. (1/29/14).

NOAA – Carib Tails



The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) issued a **news release** stating that commercial and recreational seafarers are invited to help track movements of endangered humpback whales in waters of the northwestern Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea as part of the **Carib Tails** international citizen science effort. The black and white patterns on the underside of humpback whale flukes are unique, allowing individual whales to be identified. Photographs can be compared, allowing whale movements to be accurately recorded. (1/29/14).

DOJ – illegal importation of piranhas



The Department of Justice (DOJ) issued a **news release** stating that a tropical fish importer pleaded guilty in federal court to violating the Lacey Act by mislabeling imported piranhas. He admitted to importing 39,548 piranhas by labeling them as silver tetras, a common and unaggressive aquarium fish. (1/29/14). *Note: This is not a usual item for this newsletter, but I could not resist including it, for obvious reasons. Some aquarium owners may be in for a surprise.*

IMO – draft Polar Code



The IMO issued a **news release** stating that the Sub-Committee on Ship Design and Construction (SDC) agreed in principle to the draft text of revised Polar Code. It also agreed in principle to proposed draft amendments to the SOLAS and MARPOL Conventions to make the Code mandatory. The Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) will take up the proposed SOLAS amendments at its meeting in May. The Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) will take up the proposed MARPOL amendments at its meeting in April. (1/28/14).

EU NAVFOR – suspected pirates transferred to Seychelles



The EU NAVFOR issued a **press release** stating that five suspected Somali pirates have been transferred to the custody of the Republic of Seychelles for prosecution. The individuals were apprehended on 18 January, following the boarding of an Indian dhow. The individuals are suspected of having hijacked the dhow and using it as a mothership to launch attacks on other vessels. (1/30/14).

New Zealand – SeaCert



Maritime New Zealand issued a **media release** stating that Transport Minister Gerry Brownlee signed into law the Maritime Rules giving effect to SeaCert – a major overhaul of the certification process for New Zealand seafarers and providing a licensing framework for domestic and international Certificates of Competency and Proficiency. SeaCert comes into force on 1 April. (1/30/14).

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If you have questions regarding the above items, please contact the editor:

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