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USCG – second round of El Faro hearings;  
USCG – VGM equivalency;  
USCG - \$100,000 civil penalty assessed for laser strike;  
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EC – CMA CGM acquisition of NOL conditionally approved;  
Panama Canal – ship selected for first transit through expanded canal;  
Panama Canal – locks lane outages;  
Panama Canal – daylight transit option; and  
Singapore – two bunker licenses revoked.

May 2, 2016



# Bryant's Maritime News

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## **USCG – second round of El Faro hearings**



The US Coast Guard issued a [media advisory](#) stating that a second round of public hearings for the Marine Board of Investigation into the loss of the US-flag vessel El Faro and the 33 persons on board will be held on 16-27 May in Jacksonville. This round will focus on shipboard operations and cargo loading, lashing, and stowage operations for the accident voyage, while also examining the vessel's analysis of stability and the weather conditions forecasted and encountered. In addition, the regulatory oversight for the El Faro will be

examined for potential implications of that oversight on the accident voyage. A third round of hearings (at a date to be determined) will examine additional elements of the investigation including crew witnesses, TOTE company officials, and contents of the vessel's voyage data recorder (VDR) if it can be recovered and analyzed. The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), conducting its own investigation, will participate fully in the Marine Board of Investigation hearings. (4/27/16)

[<http://www.uscgnews.com/external/content/document/4007/2813894/1/EL%20FARO%20Hearing%20-%20Hearing%20Two%20Initial%20Release.pdf>].

### USCG – VGM equivalency



The US Coast Guard issued a Marine Safety Information Bulletin stating that the agency has determined that existing US laws and regulations for providing verified container weights are equivalent to the requirements in the amended SOLAS Regulation VI/2 regarding verified gross mass (VGM) of maritime shipping containers. **MSIB 09-16** (4/28/16)

[[http://www.uscg.mil/msib/docs/009\\_16\\_4-28-2016.pdf](http://www.uscg.mil/msib/docs/009_16_4-28-2016.pdf)].

### USCG – \$100,000 civil penalty assessed for laser strike



The US Coast Guard issued a **news release** stating that it has assessed a civil penalty of \$100,000 against a passenger on the Washington State Ferry Kitsap for pointing his laser at the pilot house of the ferry Tokiate as the two ferries passed between Mukilteo and Clinton on 22 October 2015. The laser strike injured the master and chief mate. The passenger was found to have violated safety and security zone regulations, as well as interfering with the safe operation of a vessel. (4/29/16)

[<http://www.uscgnews.com/go/doc/4007/2814974/>]. *Note: This item was brought to my attention by my good friend Robert C. Schoening of Workplace Substance Abuse Consulting.*

### MERPAC – meeting on 25-26 May



A working group of the Merchant Marine Personnel Advisory Committee (MERPAC), sponsored by the US Coast Guard, will meet on 25-26 May in Martinsburg, West Virginia. The purpose of the meeting is to work on Task Statement 30 to evaluate utilizing military education, training, and assessment to satisfy national and STCW credential requirements. **81 Fed. Reg. 25686** [<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2016-04-29/pdf/2016-09972.pdf>] (4/29/16).

## Admiralty Inlet – WAMS review



The US Coast Guard issued a **news release** stating that it seeks public comment regarding a waterways analysis and management system (WAMS) review of Admiralty Inlet, connecting the eastern end of the Strait of Juan de Fuca to Puget Sound. Comments should be received by 31 July. (4/29/16) [<http://www.uscgnews.com/go/doc/4007/2815046/>].

## USCG – hydrogen fuel cell powered passenger ferry



The US Coast Guard issued a **notice** stating that it is working with a ferry owner and other stakeholders on a MARAD-funded feasibility study to examine the technical, regulatory, and economic aspects of building and operating a high-speed hydrogen fuel cell powered passenger ferry and hydrogen refueling station. (4/29/16) [<http://mariners.coastguard.dodlive.mil/2016/04/29/4292016-coast-guard-works-on-hydrogen-fuel-cell-high-speed-passenger-ferry/>].

## BSEE – decommissioning cost estimates



The Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE) issued a **Notice to Lessees** (NTL) providing guidance and clarification for the decommissioning rule for offshore oil and gas wells. Lessees are required to make determinations of decommissioning costs for each permanently plugged well, removed platform or facility and each site cleared so that the agency can properly prepare future decommissioning liability estimates. (4/28/16) [[http://www.bsee.gov/uploadedFiles/BSEE/Regulations\\_and\\_Guidance/Notices\\_to\\_Lessees/2016/Decom%20Cost%20Reporting%20NTL%2004.27.16.pdf](http://www.bsee.gov/uploadedFiles/BSEE/Regulations_and_Guidance/Notices_to_Lessees/2016/Decom%20Cost%20Reporting%20NTL%2004.27.16.pdf)].

## House – bill introduced re navigational servitude in Valdez



Representative Young (R-AK) introduced a bill (H.R. 5087) to remove the Federal claim to navigational servitude for a tract of land developed due to dredging disposal from a harbor project in Valdez, Alaska, and for other purposes. Official text of the bill is not yet available. (4/27/16).

## Senate – bill introduced re Asia-Pacific maritime domains



Senator Cardin (D-MD) introduced a bill (S. 2865) to promote stability and security in the Asia-Pacific maritime domains, and for other purposes. Official text of the bill is not yet available. (4/27/16).

## Senate – recognizing 100th anniversary of USCG aviation



The Senate agreed to a resolution (**S. Res. 445**) introduced by Senator Thune (R-SD) recognizing the 100th anniversary of Coast Guard aviation and the contribution of Coast Guard aviators to naval aviation and the safety and security of the United States. (4/27/16) [<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-114sres445ats/pdf/BILLS-114sres445ats.pdf>].

## EC – CMA CGM acquisition of NOL conditionally approved



The European Commission (EC) issued a **press release** stating that it has approved the proposed acquisition of Neptune Oriental Lines (NOL) by rival CMA CGM. The clearance is conditional upon NOL leaving the G6 liner shipping alliance. (4/29/16) [[http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-16-1631\\_en.htm?locale=en](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-1631_en.htm?locale=en)].

## Panama Canal – ship selected for first transit through expanded canal



The Panama Canal Authority (ACP) issued a **press release** stating that the container vessel Andronikos, operated by China COSCO Shipping, has been selected for the first transit through the Expanded Panama Canal on Sunday, 26 June. (4/29/16) [<https://www.pancanal.com/eng/pr/press-releases/2016/04/29/pr586.html>].

## Panama Canal – locks lane outages



The Panama Canal Authority (ACP) issued an advisory stating that the east lane of the Miraflores Locks will be out of service from 0001, Wednesday, 4 May until 2359, Friday, 6 May to perform scheduled dry chamber seal repairs. Also, the west lane of the Gatun Locks will be out of service during all of Thursday, 5 May to perform emergency repairs. As a result, Transit Reservation System Condition 2 will be in effect from 4 May until 6 May.

**Advisory 21-2016** (4/28/16)

[<https://www.pancanal.com/common/maritime/advisories/2016/a-21-2016.pdf>].

### **Panama Canal – daylight transit option**



The Panama Canal Authority (ACP) issued an advisory stating that, in addition to passenger vessels and yachts, the daylight transit option is available to military vessels and non-commercial government-owned vessels.

**Advisory 22-2016** (4/29/16)

[<https://www.pancanal.com/common/maritime/advisories/2016/a-22-2016.pdf>].

### **Singapore – two bunker licenses revoked**



The Singapore Maritime and Port Authority (MPA) issued a **news release** stating that the licenses of two bunker licensees have been revoked. (4/28/16) [<http://www.mpa.gov.sg/web/portal/home/media-centre/news-releases/detail/f4925e14-9293-4001-ac3b-e8d6cee58675>].

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