

Headlines:

NTSB – El Faro investigation;
FMC – petition for filing exemption;
USCG – Environmental Protection Award;
NOAA – Arctic warming;
DOE - \$18.5 million for offshore wind R&D;
Senate – hearing on National Ocean Policy;
Senate – bill introduced re incidental discharges;
House – bill introduced re natural gas imports/exports;
House – bill introduced re small natural gas imports/exports; and
GAO – GPS modernization.

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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. 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. The Ship of Theseus sails forever.*

NTSB – El Faro investigation



The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) issued a **news release** concerning the October 2015 sinking of the US cargo vessel El Faro with the loss of 33 persons on board. The NTSB identified various leading causal factors including: (1) the captain's navigation decisions; (2) inaccurate weather information; (3) poor bridge team management; (4) lack of oversight by the owner; (5) inadequate damage control plans; and (6) carriage of obsolete open lifeboats. (12/12/17) [<https://www.nts.gov/news/press-releases/Pages/PR20171212.aspx>].

FMC – petition for filing exemption



The Federal Maritime Commission (FMC) issued a notice stating that Great White Fleet Liner Services Ltd and Great White Fleet Corporation have petitioned for an exemption from the requirement that each service amendment be signed by both parties and filed with the FMC. They state that there is a pending corporate restructuring that will result in Great White Fleet Liner Services transferring agreed upon assets and services to Great White Fleet Corporation. Comments on the petition must be received by 27 December. **82 Fed. Reg. 58603** (12/13/17) [<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2017-12-13/pdf/2017-26819.pdf>].

USCG – Environmental Protection Award



The US Coast Guard is accepting applications for the **2018 Rear Admiral William M. Benkert Environmental Protection Award for Excellence**. The award recognizes corporations and businesses involved in marine facility or vessel operations that have demonstrated sustained excellence and outstanding achievement in protecting the marine environment and will be presented during the American Petroleum Institute Panel and Luncheon in New Orleans, LA on March 2nd, 2018. Application deadline is 12 January 2018. (12/11/17) [<https://homeport.uscg.mil/Lists/Content/DispForm.aspx?&ID=406&Source=https://homeport.uscg.mil/missions/environmental/outreach-programs/awards>].

NOAA – Arctic warming



The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) issued a **news release** stating that 2017 has been another warm year for the Arctic. Average annual air temperature over land was the second highest after 2016, with a temperature of 2.9°F or 1.6°C above the historic average. Maximum winter sea ice, measured in March, was the lowest ever observed, while the minimum sea ice, measured in September, was the eighth lowest. (12/12/17) [<http://www.noaa.gov/media-release/arctic-saw-2nd-warmest-year-smallest-winter-sea-ice-coverage-on-record-in-2017>].

DOE – \$18.5 million for offshore wind R&D



The Department of Energy (DOE) issued a [news release](#) stating that \$18.5 million in funding has been awarded for offshore wind research and development. (12/12/17) [<https://www.energy.gov/articles/secretary-energy-rick-perry-announces-185-million-offshore-wind-research>].

Senate – hearing on National Ocean Policy



The Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries, and Coast Guard of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science & Transportation conducted a hearing entitled: [National Ocean Policy – Stakeholder Perspectives](#). Testimony was received from Ms. Bonnie Brady, Long Island Commercial Fishing Association; Mr. Christopher Guith, US Chamber of Commerce; Mr. Dan Keppen, Family Farm Alliance; and Ms. Kathy Metcalf, Chamber of Shipping of America. (12/12/17) [<https://www.commerce.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2017/12/national-ocean-policy-stakeholder-perspectives>].

Senate – bill introduced re incidental discharges



Senator Cantwell (D-WA) introduced the [Fishing and Small Vessel Relief Act](#) (S. 2194) to remove a limitation on a prohibition relating to permits for discharges incidental to normal operation of vessels. (12/5/17) [<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-115s2194is/pdf/BILLS-115s2194is.pdf>].

House – bill introduced re natural gas imports/exports



Representative Johnson (R-OH) introduced a bill (H.R. 4605) to repeal restrictions on the export and import of natural gas. Official text of the bill is not yet available, but Representative Johnson issued a [press release](#) explaining the measure. (12/11/17) [<https://billjohnson.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=399312>].

House – bill introduced re small natural gas imports/exports



Representative Johnson (R-OH) introduced a bill (H.R. 4606) to provide that applications under the Natural Gas Act for the importation or exportation of small volumes of natural gas shall be granted without modification or delay. Official text of the bill is not yet available, but Representative Johnson issued a [press release](#) explaining the measure. (12/11/17) [<https://billjohnson.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=399312>].

GAO – GPS modernization



The Government Accountability Office (GAO) issued a report on the Global Positioning System (GPS). It finds that better planning and coordination is needed to improve prospects for fielding a modernized capability. [GAO-18-74](#) (12/12/17) [<http://www.gao.gov/assets/690/688936.pdf>].

MREN – Alternative Compliance Program



In the December 2017 edition of Maritime Reporter and Engineering News, you can find my article entitled [Alternative Compliance Program](#). The article discusses the US Coast Guard program for delegating to authorized classification societies the authority to perform specific inspections on US-flag vessels on its behalf. The USCG investigation into the tragic loss of the cargo ship El Faro identified various shortcomings in this program. Efforts should be undertaken to get it back on track. (12/12/17) [<http://www.brymarconsulting.com/wp-content/uploads/MREN/MREN171200.pdf>].

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