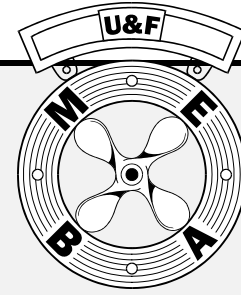


LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

JUNE 2008



House and Senate Pass 2007 Farm Bill Despite Presidential Veto

On May 22, 2008 House and Senate leaders prevailed in protecting the interests of our nation's families and maritime community by overriding the Bush Administration's veto of H.R. 2419 – The Food, Conservation & Energy Act. The five-year measure continues and in some cases expands traditional farm subsidies, and provides billions of dollars of new money for anti-hunger programs, conservation programs, fruit and vegetable growers, and the bio-fuels industry. More importantly to the membership was President Bush's call to modify the current structure of P.L. 480 – the Food for Peace Program. The food aid generated by PL-480 is key piece of preference cargo that helps to maintain the U.S. Merchant Marine. Under current law, U.S. food assistance for famine stricken countries around the globe must be spent purchasing U.S. crops. The President had requested that up to 25% of the P.L. 480 Title II Food for Peace program funding be given directly to designated countries in the form of cash payments, instead of taking American grown food and shipping it overseas aboard U.S.-flag vessels.

Through months of aggressive grassroots political action and the combined efforts of M.E.B.A. & American Maritime Congress, Members of Congress realized that, while in theory the modification would cut costs, the economic pitfalls of removing U.S.-flagged ships from the process far outweigh the minimal benefits of curbing shipping costs.

Senator Kennedy Diagnosed with Brain Tumor

The "Lion of the Left" Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-MA) has a malignant brain tumor in his left parietal lobe, a condition that has proven fatal within a year for half of those with such a diagnosis. The tumor was discovered after the 76-year-old Senator suffered a seizure and checked into Massachusetts General Hospital. The Senator underwent a surgical procedure on Monday at Duke University Medical Center. He will then undergo a regimen of radiation and chemotherapy at Mass General. Kennedy has served in the Senate for 46 years - since 1962 - and has been a stalwart on labor and maritime issues. Our prayers are with him and the entire Kennedy family.