



Officers from the JSU and Dockers unions rally against Dowa Line on Feb. 5, 2010.

81st ITF FOC/POC campaign held

From Feb. 1-4, the 81st ITF Eastern Asia FOC/POC Campaign was staged at 42 ports in 15 districts across Japan.

The JSU worked alongside the Japanese Confederation of Port and Harbor Transport Workers' Unions (Koun Domei) and the National Federation of Dockworkers Union of Japan (Senkoku-Kowan) as well as seafarer and dockworker unions of South Korea, Taiwan and Russia.

During the campaign, protests were staged against Sinotrans Nagoya and Heyperion, which had rejected onboard inspections by rolling up accommodation ladders and other equipment.

Protests were also staged against Kotoku Kaiun and Dowa Line on Feb. 2 and Feb. 5, respectively.

(I) Campaign activities

- (1) Number of ships that underwent onboard inspections: 116
- (2) Number of ships that promised to comply with the International Bargaining Forum (IBF) agreements: four
- (3) Number of ships that began negotiations: three
- (4) Number of ships with crewmembers onboard that were helped in resolving complaints: three

(II) Kotoku Kaiun

On Feb. 2, 37 Japanese seafarers

and dockworkers organized a group protest against Kotoku Kaiun at its head office.

(III) Dowa Line

On Feb. 5, a group of 62 Japanese seafarers as well as port and harbor workers protested in front of Dowa Line's headquarters.

The same day, a labor union from Trinidad and Tobago, a member of the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), also gave a demonstration, while ITF inspectors from the United States, Canada and Latin America also conducted onboard inspections and sent letters of protest.

CSU, JSU meet on projects to educate Chinese seafarers

On Feb. 9, the CSU-JSU Committee for Managing Projects to Educate Chinese Seafarers held a meeting at the Chinese Seafarers' Union (CSU)'s headquarters in Beijing.

Attended by representatives of the JSU, the CSU, the International Mariners Management Association of Japan (IMMAJ) and the Dalian International Maritime Service Co. (DIMSCO), the meeting confirmed various matters relating to the center in Dalian for training and educating Chinese seamen.

At the start of the meeting, the CSU-JSU Committee for Managing English-education Projects for Chinese Seafarers, an organization for the JSU and the CSU to discuss projects to educate Chinese seafarers, was renamed the CSU-JSU Committee for Managing Projects to Educate Chinese Seafarers.

It was followed by discussions on various matters relating to the CSU-JSU-IMMAJ China Dalian Seaman Integrated Training Center, which is currently under development in Dalian.

It will be a training facility where Chinese seafarers will be able to learn bridge resource management (BRM) and English.

It was determined during the meeting that the center would accommodate 60 students a year for its English course and 115 students for its BRM course.

Moreover, it was also agreed to hold further discussions on an operation system, the number of teachers and other workers as well as training plans, among other topics.

An opening ceremony for the center and an entrance ceremony for the students will be held on April 2.



Representatives of the JSU, the CSU, the IMMAJ and DIMSCO meet on Feb. 9 in Beijing.



Left photo: On behalf of the JSU and VGCL (Vietnamese General Confederation of Labor), JSU Vice President Norimasa Ohuchi distributes graduation certificates and gifts to the trainees.

Top photo: Graduates competing in the English Speech contest.

64 seafarers graduate at 23rd VSUP ceremony

To improve the English competency of Vietnamese seafarers who will eventually be employed by the Japanese commercial fleet, the JSU launched an intensive English-language training course in Haiphong in October 1998 for a class of 20 students.

In December 2000, the class was enlarged to 40 students, and in December 2002, a similar course commenced in Ho Chi Minh City for a class of 20 students.

The JSU has been extensively contributing to the improvement of Vietnamese seamen's English-language skills.

Meanwhile, the 23rd VSUP graduation

ceremonies were held in Haiphong on Jan. 27, 2010, and Ho Chi Minh City on Jan. 28, both of which were attended by representatives from Japan and Vietnam's maritime industries.

At the ceremonies, the Japanese and Vietnamese organizers of the training course spoke about the 23rd VSUP Eng-

lish course, honored top performers, and conferred graduation certificates and commemorative gifts.

Students gave speeches in English to show how much they had learned over the previous four months, prior to the commencement of 64 seafarers from the course.

Negotiating crewing costs to weigh heavy on shipowners as freight, charter rates improve

Better freight rates might mean owners will have to pay more in salaries for seafarers, despite owners' pleas. An improving shipping market could work against shipowners' interests when negotiations on minimum pay levels for seafarers re-open next year at the International Bargaining Forum (IBF).

If the encouraging early year trend for firmer demand and better freight rates is maintained in 2010, the owners' Joint Negotiating Group might find it hard to plead poverty when confronted with calls from the International Transport Worker's Federation (ITF) for better financial entitlements for seafarers.

During three meetings of the IBF in 2009, and despite ITF requests for increases for minimum pay levels, shipowner associations from Europe and Asia and the International Maritime Employers Committee, which make up the group were able to

use the financial crisis as an argument to defer changes to pay scale agreements.

With increases ruled out until the end of 2010, it seems certain that union negotiators will return to the table with a clear idea about the increases they would like to achieve – particularly if shipping demand, and thus freight and charter rates, continue to improve.

It will be an extra cost burden for shipowners, who are already coping with increased costs arising from the ratification and adoption of the Maritime Labor Convention (likely in late 2010 and late 2011 respectively).

Giles Heimann, secretary-general of IMEC, described the 2009 negotiations as "difficult but amicable".

He said that a commitment was made to hold meetings in 2010 to review the bargaining methodology ahead of the opening of formal negotiations in 2011.

"We are happy to sit down and discuss the system and see if our

understanding of the methodology has diverged.

"This is a breathing space that we can use and we're open to a review, to sitting down and seeing what can be done better," he told *Fairplay*.

He predicted there will be "no major changes" to the benchmarking system beyond bringing descriptions and model manning levels up to date, and said that owners would not welcome any increase in crew costs in the short to medium term.

"While an understanding was reached during 2009 that pay reviews would be kept on hold until the end of 2010, initial indications seem to show that the industry will not undergo any large change for the foreseeable future," Heimann said.

The October 2010 meeting will look at the "continued effect of the financial crisis on the ability of shipowners to agree to any future increase in minimum salary levels," he added.

A moratorium on pay increases could lead to a drop in recruitment and retention of crew – a situation the industry will aim to avoid as it steers a course through what appears to be the tail-end of the financial crisis.

IMEC may have its entrenched position on increases, but it has proved to be effective at improving conditions for seafarers in the past.

Through the JNG, IMEC was the first owners' organisation to classify the Gulf of Aden as a high-risk area commanding improved terms for seafarers. It was followed in this decision by most other owner associations, but Heimann said no further extensions were planned.

"We increased the high-risk area three times over and the irony is if you look at subsequent attacks, what you see is the pirates following the ships further and further offshore. Just increasing the high-risk area isn't achieving very much. (Source: *Fairplay*)

Green car carrier scheme begins

Mitsu O.S.K. Lines (MOL) joined Mitsubishi HI and Sanyo Electric in a scheme to develop a hybrid car carrier partly powered by renewable energy. Funding is from Japan's transport ministry.

MOL considers the project part of a larger plan to reduce damaging emissions from the fleet of the future.

"If we were pursuing this purely on an economic basis, then it would be very difficult to say that the project would be profitable, so we consider this to be just one more step in realising a new generation of ships," Yoshikazu Kawagoe, technical general manager at MOL, said.

The companies are developing a hybrid power supply that stores solar-generated power in lithium-ion batteries, he said. These are charged when the ship is at sea but supply power when the vessel is docked, permitting the diesel generator to be shut down.

Work is under way on a standard car carrier that will be fitted with the new system at Mitsubishi's yards in Kobe, Kawagoe said.

It will have a capacity of about 6,400 vehicles when completed in 2012. (Source: *Fairplay*)

MAAP graduates 1st batch from BSMTE qualification program

The Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific (MAAP) recently achieved another milestone with the graduation of the first batch of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED)-approved Bachelor of Science in Marine Transportation and Engineering (BSMTE).

MAAP president Vice Admiral Eduardo Ma. R. Santos (AFP, ret.) said the academy is the only institution offering this course in the Philippines, and it is a "fusion" of the curricula for the Bachelor of Science in Marine Transportation (BSMT) for deck officers and the Bachelor of Science in Marine Engineering (BSMarE) for engi-

neer Officers.

The course lasts nine semesters or four-and-a-half years and the graduates can take the licensure examinations for OIC of a Deck Watch and OIC of an Engineering Watch administered by the Professional Regulations Commission (PRC), according to Santos who added that "aboardship, these dual qualified officers can be assigned either to the deck or to the engine department as deemed necessary by the shipping companies concerned."

This scheme has been practiced predominantly in European shipping firms but of late, only rela-

tively large companies are using it, he said.

This BSMTE course offering at MAAP is customer-driven. A.P. Moller-Maersk Lines specifically requested for a Dual Qualification Course in line with its innovative scheme to develop a "dual maritime leader."

The course was officially opened in 2006 with 22 male midshipmen. Now there are 16 in the graduating class, while there is still a total of 115 cadets in the succeeding classes, with all scholars of A.P. Moller-Maersk. Midshipman Angelito D. Gonzales of Limay, Bataan is graduating at the top of his class.

Vice Admiral Santos, together with MAAP board chairman Capt. Gregorio S. Oca (MM, Ph.D.) congratulated the graduates for surviving, consequently hurdling the grueling academic schedule, and expressed high hopes that their double dose of education would result in a double dose of accomplishments.

In his commencement address, Mr. Jesper Dalgaard Larsen, president of Maersk Filipinas Inc., exhorted the graduates to continue persevering to improve themselves and show to the world the versatility and competence of Filipino seafarers. (Source: *MB*)

Container fleet capacity falls in '09

The active capacity of the world's 20 largest ocean container carriers shrunk 2.4 percent over the past year, but there was relatively little change in their global market shares.

The top 20 lines actually boosted their combined fleets by 1.6 percent in the year to Jan. 1, 2010, but their effective capacity declined as they idled more vessels in response to lower cargo volume, according to Alphaliner, the Paris-based container shipping consultant.

The combined capacity of the top 20 reached 10.81 million TEU on Jan. 1, compared with 10.63 million TEU a year ago.

The leading carriers idled capacity currently stands at 743,000 TEU, equivalent to 6.9 percent of their operating fleet. This is more than double the 328,000 TEU of idled capacity, or some 3.1 percent of the fleet, on Jan. 1, 2009.

There were no new entrants to Alphaliner's Top 20 rankings although as a group their share of total liner shipping capacity slipped from 81.6 percent to 79.2 percent over the year. Danish carrier Maersk Line retained its overall lead with capacity of 2.04 million TEU, despite its global market share shrinking from 15.6 percent to 15 percent.

There are 5,892 ships active in the liner trades with a combined capacity of 13,642,270 TEU, according to Alphaliner. This includes 4,709 fully cellular vessels with a total capacity of 13,048,701 TEU. (Source: *Journal of Commerce*)

Every year, the International Maritime Organization chooses a theme for its World Maritime Day, which is generally celebrated during the last week in September. In 2009, the IMO chose "Climate Change" as the theme. This year, 2010, will be named "Year of the Seafarer," the IMO said. The following is an excerpt of the dedication posted on its Web site.

"The International Maritime Organization has decided to dedicate next year to you by choosing, as the theme for World Maritime Day, '2010: Year of the Seafarer.' Our intention is to pay tribute to you, the world's 1.5 million seafarers – men and women from all over the globe – for the unique, and all too often over-looked, contribution you make to the well-being of all of us....

"At IMO, we are ever-conscious of the important role you play in helping us achieve safe, secure and efficient shipping on clean oceans....And so, we will celebrate

IMO dedicates 2010 'Year of the Seafarer'

next year's World Maritime Day theme with much pride in your contribution to our objectives, to the facilitation of more than 90 percent of the world's trade, and to sustainable human development.

"In so doing, we also seek to reassure you, at the 'sharp end' of the industry, that we, who are responsible for the international regulatory regime and who serve shipping from ashore, do understand the extreme pressures that you face and that, as a result, we approach our own tasks with a genuine sympathy for the work that you carry out.

"At the same time, we will seek to add impetus to the 'Go to Sea!' campaign, which we launched in November 2008 to attract new entrants to the shipping industry and, in particular, to encourage young people to follow in your

footsteps by becoming the seafarers of tomorrow.

"We launched that campaign in association with the International Labour Organization, the 'Round Table' of shipping industry organizations (International Chamber of Shipping, International Shipping Federation, BIMCO, International Association of Independent Tanker Owners and International Association of Dry Cargo Shipowners) and the International Transport Workers' Federation, all of whom will be joining us in celebrating the Year of the Seafarer.

"Last, but most importantly, we want to convey to you a clear message that the entire shipping community understands and cares for you – as shown by the efforts we make to ensure that you are fairly treated when ships on which you serve become involved in accidents; are looked after when you

are abandoned in ports; are not refused shore leave for security purposes; are protected when your work takes you into piracy-infested areas; and are not left unaided when you are in distress at sea.

"[Some] 1.5 million seafarers serving the daily needs of more than 6.5 billion citizens of the world!

"It is a fact that goes unnoticed or is taken for granted by most, but one that should be trumpeted loud and clear.

"For seafarers the world over deserve our respect, recognition and gratitude and, during 2010, we at IMO are resolved to ensure that the world does take notice of your exceptional role and contribution and of the special debt that all of us owe to you.

"We thank you for that! With best wishes for the Year of the Seafarer – and a safe return home!" – E.E. Mitropoulos, secretary-general

Don't get zapped: How to remove static electricity

Static electricity results from an unequal (positive and negative) charge between two objects. What it creates is an annoying spark that can startle and sometimes jolt you unexpectedly. Here's how to minimize these shocks.

Step 1: Limit contact between moving bodies. Items collect static charge when spare electrons (trapped by a lack of conductive outlet) are collected or "swept up" by a passing body. Creating lots of friction—say, by rubbing your hands on something or dragging your feet along the carpet—encourages static electricity buildup.

Step 2: Put a cotton layer between materials that tend to hold static electricity. Paper, plastic and synthetic materials are efficient generators of static electricity. Hair, clothes and shoes are well known producers.

Step 3: Experiment with different soles to reduce your shoes' take-up of charge from synthetic carpets. Spray the carpet with an anti-static agent available from carpet suppliers.

Step 4: Wet your hair slightly before styling, and use a modern hairdryer with a built-in ion emitter (these reduce static buildup).

Step 5: Increase humidity. Static effect is increased in environments of low humidity. Buildings using air-conditioning, high levels of heating, or those with a lot of insulation can have low humidity.

Install a humidifier in your building.

Install a radiator-hung water container to increase humidity.

Open a window.

Step 6: Ground the static by touching a grounded appliance, wiring a ground circuit, or by applying a neutralizing charge. Static accumulates in areas where the charge cannot escape.

Step 7: When working with sensitive electrical components or volatile materials (such as papers/powders/flammable liquids) sparks and electrical discharge can cause catastrophic failure in sensitive electrical components and ignite volatile substances. Take steps to

eliminate them:

Wire work surfaces to grounding points. Resistive "Touch Me First" grounding pads let users drain off any static charge accumulated without causing a spark or a shock.

Wear static control wristbands, which are wired to grounding points (Do NOT wear them when working on CRT [Cathode Ray Tube] televisions or computer monitors. More than a few people have been killed when the strap touched a main capacitor).

If nothing else is available, touch a grounded metal object once in a while to remove any charge from your body. Touching a water tap works extremely well as does touching a corner of a wall where there is metal stripping under the plaster.

Professional devices are available that control static electricity by use of alpha-emitting devices containing Polonium.

Tips

Static brushes can be used by man-

ufacturers to control static in printers and other machines.

To reduce the "shock" simply use a less sensitive part of your body to discharge such as your knuckles, elbow, leg, or arm.

You can create an inexpensive anti-static spray by dumping a lot of fabric softener into a spray bottle filled with water. Spray this on carpets and other surfaces to prevent static buildup.

You can reduce or even eliminate the "shock" you feel by discharging the spark through a metal object. For example, grasp a bunch of keys and use the keys to touch a nearby grounded object.

The current will flow painlessly between a large area of your hand and the keys. Since the pain you usually experience is a result of the current being funneled through a tiny area like the end of your finger, you will be pleasantly surprised.

Shaving or clipping the hair on hairy legs will cause less static electricity to build up in the first place.

While it may be unpleasant to your psyche, it works very well.

Try carrying an anti-static dryer sheet in your pocket, and rubbing it once in a while. This works to dissipate static for people as well as laundry.

Warnings

Store volatile materials away from areas known to cause static buildup.

When using fabric softener on carpets and other surfaces that you walk on, be certain to avoid walking on the sprayed surface until the surface has dried. Footwear can become very slippery if fabric softener is accidentally applied to the soles of footwear.

Never let anyone get into or out of your vehicle while gas is being pumped, as this can cause a static buildup that can discharge when you come in contact with the metal pump, or when the nozzle comes in contact with your vehicle's fuel port.

VOICES from SEAFARERS



Crewmembers of **M/V OAKLAND**

Our company is confident of our skills that is why they provide stable jobs for us onboard. With the union behind us, our relationship with the company is harmonious.



CAPT. EDGAR S. PALQUIRAN
M/V OLYMPIAN HIGHWAY

Visits by JSU Officers is a good sign that the JSU is looking out for our welfare. I suggest that email is good at present but if possible, seafarers should be provided with satellite telephone accessible to everybody on board at a cheaper price. Hope that this suggestion will be realized soon.

C/Engr. Lauro A. Muravella
and crewmembers of
M/V CAPE ENTERPRISE

We seafarers get homesick working on board for long periods of time. But your ship visitations ease our boredom. Thanks for the latest maritime information.



Capt. Myo Thu Myint (2nd from right) and other officers of
M/V GLOBAL NEXTAGE



The crew and I thank JSU union officers and ISS for visiting our vessel, and we appreciate very much the welfare goods distributed to all the Myanmar crew. Hope to see you again.



Capt. Antonio B. Saroca and crew of
M/V SHIRANE
with JSU staff

We are grateful for all the assistance that our union is giving to us and also grateful for the fraternity that binds us all seafarers.



Capt. Jaime M. Tecson
M/V BORON NAVIGATOR

Every seafarer who completes his contract should be entitled to be replaced no matter how good or bad his performance is and the company should do its duty to ensure the loyalty of their crew. I thank the JSU Union Officers and the ITF coordinator for quickly acting on our problems and request.



Capt. Gilberto S. Poblete,
C/E James C. Tiu
and crew of
M/V INUYAMA

Thank you for your regular ship visitation; this way you keep us in touch and abreast with the current news and information regarding union activities and funding of various facilities that support the members.

JOKE CORNER

Difference Between Guts & Balls

There is a medical distinction. We've all heard about people having guts or balls, but do you really know the difference between them? In an effort to keep you informed, the definitions are listed below:

GUTS – Is arriving home late after a night out with the guys, being met by your wife with a broom, and having the guts to ask: "Are you still cleaning, or are you flying somewhere?"

BALLS – Is coming home late after a night out with the guys, smelling of perfume and beer, lipstick on your collar, slapping your wife on the butt and having the balls to say: "You're next, Chubby."

I hope this clears up any confusion on the definitions. Medically speaking there is no difference in the outcome. Each results in death.

Submitted By: Hero

Guidelines address post-piracy care for seafarers

The Seamen's Church Institute (SCI) has published *Preliminary Guidelines: Post-Piracy Care for Seafarers*, outlining preliminary strategies on caring for seafarers (merchant mariners) affected by piracy.

The document, based on cutting-edge mental health research and ongoing discussions with shipowners, crewing agencies, representatives of governments, and other stakeholders in the industry, provides practical guidelines for the maritime industry.

SCI presented the Preliminary Guidelines to Working Group Three of the United Nations Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia on Jan. 27, prior to the Plenary Meeting of the Contact Group the following day. SCI also plans to submit the document to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) at the



meeting of the Maritime Security Committee in May.

About the Clinical Study

In order to devote more attention to caring for seafarers affected by piracy, SCI initiated the first-ever Post Piracy Trauma Assessment and Treatment study. Clinical

Researcher Michael Garfinkle, PhD heads SCI's clinical study in conjunction with Mount Sinai School of Medicine and the New York Psychoanalytic Institute.

The clinical study seeks to identify unique stressors of piracy hostage situations, along with immediate and ongoing medical evaluation strategies for crewmembers

and their families.

Study outcomes include plans for clinically assessing seafarers after piracy incidents, assisting families during prolonged piracy episodes, and triaging short- and long-term mental health treatment.

Based on experience gained through the clinical study and stakeholder responses, SCI will update Preliminary Guidelines, available online at <http://www.seamenschurch.org/law-advocacy/piracy-trauma-study>

SCI desires to speak with seafarers who have experienced piracy, including attacks, hostage-taking, or simply sailing through high risk piracy areas.

Contact Clinical Researcher Michael Garfinkle, PhD at +1 212 349 9090 ext. 240 or by email at mgarfinkle@seamenschurch.org. SCI researchers strictly protect privacy. (Source: *Marinelink*)

Guards urged for Haiti vessels

Ships delivering aid to Haiti should install guards at access point to address increased security risks, according to the U.S. Coast Guard.

"Due to the devastation caused by the recent earthquake, the U.S. government has concerns regarding Haiti's current ability to execute, maintain and audit" international port security standards, the Coast Guard said yesterday.

It also urged captains to ensure that all security actions are included in their ship log, and also to report such actions directly to the captain of the port before arrival in the United States. Increased security measures will see "generally expedite" vessel entry back into U.S. ports, it added.

While 250 boxes per day can be offloaded at a repaired pier in Port-au-Prince, most relief supplies are still being diverted to alternative ports in Haiti and Dominican Republic and trucked from there. (Source: *Fairplay*)

Lifeboat safety questioned on 20% of ships examined

One in five ships examined by the Paris MoU were found to have deficiencies regarding launching lifeboats.

An inspection campaign was conducted by Paris MoU member countries from Sept. 1 to Nov. 30. They carried out 5,749 inspections.

Testing of lifeboat launching drills found that one in eight was not performed satisfactorily; the Paris MoU blamed a lack of training for this result.

The body also raised concerns about safety management systems relating to lifeboats on many ships.

There were 80 cases of ships being detained in the three-month period because of serious deficiencies in lifeboat launching appliances. (Source: *Fairplay*)

London Club warns out-of-date charts contributing to shipping accidents

The London P&I Club warns that out-of-date onboard charts and other nautical publications still appear to be a contributory cause of shipping accidents.

In the latest issue of its *StopLoss Bulletin*, the club notes, The International Convention for Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) requires that, "All ships should carry adequate and up-to-date charts, sailing directions, lists of lights, notices to mariners, tide tables, and all other nautical publications necessary for the intended voyage."

However, the London Club says, from time to time, it receives a report from a P&I ship inspector that the charts or other nautical publications on an entered ship are

out of date.

Two incidents reviewed recently by the club emphasize why compliance with the requirement is imperative.

In the first case, a telecommunications company alleged that a submarine cable had been damaged by a ship's anchor. The first assumption was that, if the anchor had contacted the cable, then it must have been because it was dragging and the ship had not been able to recover the anchor in due time.

However, the club-appointed surveyor quickly established that the ship had, in fact, anchored directly over the cable but that the bridge team had been completely unaware of the hazard beneath

them.

The surveyor identified that the ship had used an old edition of the chart, which predated the laying of the cable.

Apparently, on preparing the passage plan, the second officer had not checked that he had the current edition of the chart.

In the second case, the investigation into the circumstances in which a ship suffered damage as it struck a hazardous wreck confirmed that the current edition of the chart was in use but that it had not been properly corrected.

A chart correction showing the wreck had been issued some three years previously. (Source: *Maritime Global Net*)

POEA to enforce anti-piracy training

The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) recently came out with a circular (Memorandum Circular No. 02, series of 2010) issued for the purpose of providing additional training for all departing seafarers as an intervention to address piracy-related issues.

All manning agencies shall require their seafarers to undergo training on practical measures to avoid, deter or delay piracy attacks prior to deployment regardless of the vessels' trade routes. This training shall be separate to the Pre-Departure Orientation Seminar (PDOS) conducted for departing seafarers.

The training shall be provided free to seafarers which shall be conducted in-house by manning agencies. Manning agencies which cannot conduct an in-house anti-piracy training may avail of the training provided by other manning agencies whose training module has been approved by the POEA.

This mandatory anti-piracy training was effective from February 2010.

Criticism mounts over U.S. Coast Guard ballast-water rules

A U.S. Coast Guard proposal requiring vessel operators to meet tighter ballast-water standards was roundly criticized in a comment period.

The Coast Guard is considering a two-phase regulation to mandate that commercial vessels install ballast-water management systems that prevent nonindigenous species from being intro-

duced into U.S. waters.

New vessels would have to meet Phase One requirements by Jan. 1, 2012. The Phase Two deadline – which requires certain organisms found in ballast water to be reduced 1,000 times by volume – is Jan. 1, 2016.

Deadlines for existing vessels would be at the time of the vessel's first drydocking after Jan. 1,

2014 for Phase One and after Jan. 1, 2016 for Phase Two.

In its comments, the World Shipping Council estimated the cost to install equipment to meet proposed standards at US\$900,000 to \$2.3 million per ship.

The council also noted that aside from costs, the proposal – which the Coast Guard estimates

would affect more than 7,500 existing vessels – leaves the door open for individual states to require their own, stricter ballast-water requirements.

"It is simply not reasonable for ships to be expected to comply with different ballast-water treatment standards in the various U.S. states they call," the council argued. (Source: *Fairplay*)

P&I Club warns of sea-ice buildup in major Northern China ports

Freak weather conditions and/or abnormal weather patterns have been reported in several parts of the world during recent months warns the American P&I Club.

One of the latest examples is a significant buildup of sea ice in some major northern Chinese ports, the volume exceeding, it says, anything experienced in more than 30 years.

In an alert to its members, the club says the problem is centred around Bohai on the northern

Yellow Sea coast, affecting ports such as Bayuquan and Dalian.

At Bayuquan, patches of ice 500 millimeters to 600 millimeters thick have formed in some places, while lesser patches have been seen in the immediate vicinity of the port.

Three icebreakers are working to avoid delays to ships, while the local Maritime Safety Authority is strictly supervising inbound and outbound vessel traffic.

Other northern ports – such as

Jingtang, Caofeidian and Xingang – are said to be not so seriously affected.

On Jan. 17, the Chinese National Sea Weather Forecast Station reported that floating ice around Liaodong Gulf extended as far as some 60 nautical miles from shore, at Bohai Gulf around 22 miles, Northern Yellow Sea around 14 miles, and Laizhou Gulf around 33 miles.

However, with more cold weather fronts expected later, ice

coverage around the Bohai coast could expand, according to the club's correspondents in China, Huatai Agency & Consultant Services Ltd.

The club advises that vessels scheduled to call at northern ports, especially Bayuquan, should be ready for extreme temperatures and ensure Port State Control requirements are strictly followed to avoid unnecessary delay. (Source: *Maritime Global Net*)

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