

***Submitted by Barry Parker, Secretary of New York/ New Jersey chapter of International Propeller Club:***

The Maritime Association of the Port of New York & New Jersey (often referred to as MAPONY/NJ) held its inaugural event: “Trends, Challenges and Opportunities-Alternative Marine Fuels Symposium” on November 19, 2024 in midtown Manhattan during the New York Maritime Days. Using an innovative format where the panel presentations were combined with a discussion format, the day’s conversations were all about the ongoing shift from fossil fuels to low and even zero carbon alternative fuels, with a very specific focus on the Port of New York and New Jersey (PoNYNJ).

The room’s arrangement, where the panelists in the morning and afternoon sessions presented to an audience seated at round tables- rather than the typical configuration of rows and aisles, facilitated lively discussions between the sessions, and during a series of breakouts held after the panel discussions. While the goals of building up a resilient infrastructure were not disputed, the sessions revealed that the actual practicalities of bringing the new fuels to international vessels calling at the port, and for working and passenger vessels plying the local waters, are full of challenges.

The day opened with a keynote speech by Beth Rooney, Director of the Port Department at the Port Authority (PANYNJ) -where the “Clean Vessel Incentive Program” was highlighted, along with ongoing efforts at shoreside electrification. Panels then looked at “Demand”, “Supply” and “What’s Next?”, with emphasis on issues specific to the local area. Vessel owners calling in the New York ports are considering and, in some cases, already burning methanol and renewable diesel fuel. Electrically powered vessels, and vessels that could consume ammonia, are also on the horizon. However, fueling infrastructures (including some potentially linked to offshore wind) won’t come until there is sufficient demand from the vessels, driven by financial and operational incentives. Indeed, throughout the day market participants were talking about carrots/ sticks and chickens/ eggs (with one panelist insisting that the chicken comes first).

Though many of the local vessels are not directly subject to the standards and mechanisms agreed by the International Maritime Organization (the IMO), international deepsea vessels in the container and tanker trades calling at PoNYNJ terminals certainly are. All eyes are focused on carbon intensity measures and market mechanisms that might emerge from upcoming meetings of the IMO’s Maritime Environmental Protection Committee (MEPC). Similarly, *potential* legislative actions coming with a new Administration in Washington, D.C., especially possible changes in renewable energy credit mechanisms, are being watched by both fuel suppliers, and consumers. In the background of all the discussions are regulations promulgated by the U.S. Coast Guard- where a pair of speakers (one from Headquarters in Washington, D.C. and one from the local Sector New York) explained how regulators are aiming to support the transitions to new fuels- including working closely with an operator of an ammonia fueled vessel that recently had a demonstration in the local region.

The shift away from the present fossil fuels serving the maritime business is a work in progress. MAPONY/NJ’s Executive Director, Stephen Lyman (who worked tirelessly organizing the event) said: “As we embark on this journey together, let us remember: the conversations we have today will help us in working towards a sustainable maritime landscape locally and internationally for generations to come. Let this conference be a call to action—a space where bold ideas and development of strategies come together to propel us toward a resilient future.”

