

## PRESS RELEASE



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### For Immediate Release

#### **SUEZ Announces Agreement with U.S. Maritime Administration**

##### *Groundbreaking Plan to Encourage U.S. Mariner Participation in the LNG Industry*

BOSTON, Dec. 20, 2006 – SUEZ Energy North America's subsidiary, SUEZ LNG NA LLC (SUEZ), today announced a groundbreaking agreement with the U.S. Maritime Administration designed to begin generating employment opportunities for U.S. mariners onboard liquefied natural gas (LNG) vessels.

The transport of LNG between countries to meet natural gas needs is a burgeoning international industry, with the international (privately owned) LNG shipping fleet growing at a rate of 15-20% a year.

Today, all LNG ships worldwide are flagged under non-U.S. countries. SUEZ' ships, for example, are flagged primarily under Norway and Spain. As a result, there are no U.S.-licensed mariners on these vessels, and the U.S. shipping industry does not currently share in this growing job market.

Through a conference call with reporters, Sean T. Connaughton, U.S. Maritime Administrator said, "The reason this program is so critical is that through it SUEZ starts the pipeline to reintroduce U.S. mariners to the LNG trades. We give SUEZ incredible credit for recognizing that it is critical to begin training U.S. mariners at the beginning of the upsurge in LNG shipping. It will benefit them today and in the future as they provide mariners for the future."

Under the agreement, SUEZ has agreed to provide training opportunities for both U.S. citizen officers and cadets to obtain the experience and sea time necessary to qualify as LNG officers. In addition, SUEZ pledged its efforts to employ a mix of U.S. trained officers and unlicensed mariners on its existing fleet of chartered LNG vessels as well as those under construction and at the Neptune LNG Deepwater Port project.

"Our company works everyday to be a pacesetter within the LNG industry," said Joseph McKechnie, Senior Vice President, Shipping, SUEZ Global LNG. "We have been a leader in the increased importation of LNG into the U.S, and have long supported the training of U.S. mariners, through programs such as our cadet program with the Massachusetts Maritime Academy. Now through this agreement with the Maritime Administration, we look forward to promoting a new level of opportunity within our business for professional U.S. mariners."

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