

[SUNY Maritime asks for state help with federal funding](#)

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ALBANY—SUNY Maritime College needs a new ship, according to officials at the school.

During a visit to the school from Lt. Gov. Kathy Hochul on Wednesday, officials made the case for state funding in order to begin construction on the new vessel by 2017. Otherwise, the officials said, the college would be unable to produce licensed mariners.

SUNY Maritime, one of six maritime academies in the nation, currently uses the Empire VI, a 17,000 ton, 565-foot ship, as the primary means for training cadets and helping them earn required sea time for a U.S. Coast Guard Merchant Mariner license. Empire VI, which is owned by the U.S. Maritime Administration, also responds to disasters and national emergencies.

At 53 years old, the National Security Multi-Mission Vessel is the oldest of the six academies' fleets. Its Coast Guard certification and service life will expire in 2019 and it takes two years to build a new ship, according to the college.

SUNY Maritime has secured \$5 million in federal appropriations to design the new training ship, but building it will cost hundreds of millions of dollars, a SUNY spokesman said. An exact amount has not been released.

A spokesperson for Hochul said the state will continue conversations with the college about funding.

“As one of our most promising START-UP NY hotspots, Lieutenant Governor Hochul was eager to tour SUNY Maritime College to discuss new ways to attract jobs and opportunity in the Bronx,” according to a statement from spokesman Jason Elan. “As part of these conversations, the Lieutenant Governor also heard from school officials about the necessity for a replacement ship. On behalf of Governor (Andrew) Cuomo, we remain committed to continuing this dialogue.”

The five other maritime colleges, in Maine, Michigan, Massachusetts, Texas and California, also will soon be needing to replace their training ships and administrators hope the federal government will address this with a larger appropriation, a SUNY spokesman said.

While the cost to build Empire VII is too large for a single state to incur, SUNY Chancellor Nancy Zimpher is committed to helping the college secure federal funding, according to a statement.

Read more about the quest for a new ship here: <http://bit.ly/1HucTV9>

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