



Wallenius Wilhelmsen aims to build a wind-powered ro-ro car carrier capable of carrying 7,000 vehicles. The plans have been boosted by €9m in research funding from Horizon Europe. Photo: Wallenius Wilhelmsen

## Wind power booster claims halved fuel bills in pitch for alternative fuels future

James Rhodes of Magnuss Corp said wind propulsion systems are the only alternative fuels providing return on investment

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By [Matt Coyne](#) in [Stamford](#)

Amid other potential fuels, wind propulsion made its pitch at the Connecticut Maritime Association conference on Wednesday.

During a panel on alternative fuels, Magnuss Corp chief executive James Rhodes said wind power was the only alternative power system providing a return on investment for its users.



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“The type of savings you see in this market, depending on the wind and the route, can be as high as 50%,” said Rhodes, whose company has developed a rotor sail. “That’s meaningful.”

Rhodes, who also sits on the International Windship Association’s (IWSA) executive board, said there will be 23 ships with some kind of wind propulsion system by the end of 2023 and another 20 that are either under construction or being retrofitted.

That is significantly lower than more popular alternative fuels like LNG, where Clarksons said there are more than 800 ships on order that can burn the fuel.

But, Rhodes said, wind systems, from rotor sails to traditional sails to kite systems, are fuel agnostic.

“To the degree that certain fuels or dual fuels are available at a time on ships, wind can also be a complementary means by which you can achieve some propulsion,” he said.

“[It is a] free, if you will, feedstock. And a powerful force ... There are probably 40 plus wind technology providers as part of the market today and as members of the IWSA.”

The other alternative fuel represented on the panel was biofuels.



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Steven Putnam, whose PEI Tech distributes Aderco fuel treatment systems in the US, said biofuels would help older ships trade longer as environmental standards become more stringent as they are a drop-in fuel that can be treated and blended with traditional bunkers.

He noted some drawbacks, as water content can lead to microbe growth and less calorific value than traditional fossil fuels, before offering some support for wind power.

He said thanks to weather tracking, owners can plan for windy conditions in which to use wind propulsion.

“As we go through this significant transition through our industry ... I think that’s going to be one of the viable solutions as well,” Putnam said.