

PRESS RELEASE

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EPA's Recent Shipping Pollution Proposal Will Save Thousands of Lives, Supported by Environmentalists at Hearing

New York, NY – At a hearing in New York held today by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency concerning its recently proposed rule to require the cleanup of dirty ocean-going ships and their fuel, the non-profit Clean Air Task Force praised the proposal as a good step forward, indicating that thousands of lives will be saved each year the rule is in effect. The Agency's proposal requires tighter limits of smog-causing nitrogen oxide (NO_x) emissions from certain newly built large ocean-going ships—now the dirtiest, most under-regulated, transportation sector; the proposal also prohibits the production and sale of high sulfur marine fuel for use in US waters, which will substantially reduce sulfur dioxide (SO₂) (causes acid rain and deadly fine particles (PM)) pollution in US coastal and port areas. The Agency's proposal broadly reflects revised international air pollution limits for ships recently approved by the International Maritime Organization—both the United States and CATF were active participants over the past 3 years in negotiations that led to the adoption of those new limits last October.

"Oceangoing ships burn some of the dirtiest fuel on the planet, and are responsible for tens of thousands of premature deaths worldwide," stated David Marshall, Senior Council with the Clean Air Task Force. "EPA's proposal will finally take a serious step forward to clean up these dirty ships, and do so in a very cost-effective way." According to nationwide monitoring data, 88 million people living in 208 counties are exposed to levels of PM pollution that exceed national health-based air quality standards. Without this new proposal, EPA estimated that by 2030 oceangoing ships in US waters would contribute almost half of the nation's total mobile source PM and NO_x emissions, and over 90% of the SO₂ inventory. EPA projects that today's proposal will prevent between 13,000 and 32,000 PM-related premature deaths by 2030. EPA also estimates that the proposal's monetized health benefits will outweigh its costs by a ratio of as much as 90 to 1.

While generally praising EPA's proposal today, CATF expressed concern that the proposal—

- does not address emissions from foreign-flagged vessels that make up the overwhelming majority of oceangoing shipping in US waters;
- does not require any reductions of NO_x emissions from the existing ships that make up the vast majority of the fleet; and

- does not contain a separate requirement to reduce primary particulate emissions from ships, including black carbon that also causes death and disease and is a significant contributor to climate change.

CATF urges the Agency to correct these deficiencies in its final rule, which is expected in 2010.

Founded in 1996, the Clean Air Task Force (CATF) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to restoring clean air and healthy environments through scientific research, public education, and legal advocacy.

A recent scientific study commissioned by the Clean Air Task Force estimated that ship emissions cause approximately 60,000 premature deaths worldwide each year.

See

http://www.catf.us/projects/international_air_quality/shipping/mortality_from_shipping_global_assessment/.

More background on the US proposal is available at <http://www.epa.gov/otaq/oceanvessels.htm#regs>.

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