



PRESS RELEASE

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Environmentalists Applaud International Shipping Pollution Reduction Plan

(London, March 26, 2010)—Tens of thousands of lives will be saved each year under a joint US-Canadian plan for air pollution controls for marine ships traveling along North American coastlines that was adopted by international negotiators today. The International Maritime Organization (IMO), the United Nation's specialized agency charged with regulating the environmental and safety aspects of international shipping, formally adopted this proposal at its meeting in London this week, and it will become effective in August 2011.

The new provision designates all sea areas within 200 miles of the US and Canadian mainland coastline as "emission control areas," where stricter pollution limits for ships will take effect during the next decade. These new limits were adopted by the IMO in October, 2008, but they will only apply to geographic areas designated by impacted coastal nations and approved by the IMO.

Tighter pollution controls in the US-Canadian will reduce acid rain and deadly particle emissions from ships in the designated areas by 75% or more in 2020, saving between 12,000 and 31,000 lives a year, according to US EPA estimates.

"This is a great step forward for health and the environment," said David Marshall of the Clean Air Task Force (CATF), an environmental organization participating in this week's discussions as well as the multi-year IMO deliberations that led to the tighter limits and that commissioned a key study estimating for the first time the global health impacts of ships. "For too long, ships have spewed enormous amounts of pollution along our coasts and in our ports. We applaud the expeditious action by the IMO in adopting this proposal to clean up shipping fuels and emissions."

Marshall noted that the world's oceangoing ships presently burn some of the world's dirtiest fuel—more than 3,000 times dirtier than the fuel that is required to be burned in US and European diesel cars and trucks. These ships emit millions of tons of sulfur each year—almost 10% of total global sulfur dioxide emissions, causing acid rain and forming deadly secondary fine particulates, a major threat to human health. Most of this pollution is emitted within 250 miles of shore and threatens the health of coastal communities and even inland cities such as Atlanta.

A CATF-commissioned study by respected academic researchers, published in December 2007 in the American Chemical Society Journal *Environmental Science & Technology* and presented to the IMO by CATF and Friends of the Earth International estimated that ship emissions cause some 60,000 premature deaths throughout the world each year. A follow-up CATF-commissioned study was also presented to the IMO and showed that under a 'no action' scenario, shipping air pollution would be responsible for more than 80,000 premature deaths per year by 2012. These studies were an important factor in securing last October's stricter emission limits.

While lauding the IMO's action on the North American air pollution proposal, Marshall expressed disappointment in the IMO's lack of progress on reducing shipping's contribution to climate change, noting that in the decade since the Kyoto climate treaty, the IMO has commissioned several studies and held plenty of debate on the climate issue—including the debate at this week's meeting—but has not yet adopted a single measure requiring reductions of greenhouse gas emissions. Such reductions are critical because emissions of carbon dioxide from international shipping are estimated to be about 1 billion tons annually—larger than those from all of Germany.

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