

High Seas High Pollution

Posted by

Sunday, 24 July 2005 03:54 - Last Updated Sunday, 24 July 2005 03:54

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Blue Water Network - With tourist season in Victoria comes too hundreds of cruise ships. These humongous vessels, some carrying as many as 5000 passengers and crew, sit just metres off shore at Ogden Point. While the guests check out the city, their ride spews bunker diesel fumes across James Bay and into the city. Something to consider, as the BWN explains: "One ship entering port generates the air pollution of 350,000 cars in one hour." - {lex}

<http://www.commondreams.org/news2005/0722-07.htm>

Shipping Industry Responds to Calls to Cut Air Pollution as Environmental Meetings Conclude

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LONDON - July 22 - Responding to pressure by environmental groups and governments, the London-based United Nations body that regulates shipping across the world agreed to review air pollution standards for the world's shipping fleet. The current regulations, adopted in 1997, are outdated and woefully inadequate. It will take two to three years to finalize any new regulations.

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) initiated a process this week to revise international standards on ship emissions and marine fuel quality and to consider regulating particulate matter produced by ship engines for the first time. Limits on existing engines will also be considered.

"Urgent action is needed to protect public health and the environment from the toxic air pollutants emitted by ship smokestacks around the world," said Teri Shore, Clean Vessels Campaign Director for Bluewater Network.

"We hope that the IMO will now lead the way to stronger air standards instead of putting shipping profits first."

David Marshall, Senior Counsel for the Clean Air Task Force, stated, "IMO's action reflects a recognition that shipping emissions are substantial and growing, but can be reduced substantially by feasible control techniques currently available."

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The IMO's new plan to revise MARPOL Annex VI was supported by Bluewater Network, Friends of the Earth International, Coalition for a Safe Environment, Clean Air Task Force and allied groups as well as nations including the United States, Canada, Mexico, United Kingdom, Sweden, Netherlands, Norway, Germany, Spain, Japan, Korea, China, Venezuela and South Africa. Nations that opposed included Russia, India, Saudi Arabia, and Argentina.

The IMO's action came after environmental groups targeted the IMO for failing to protect the environment and human health from global shipping pollution. The problems and technical solutions were outlined in official submissions by Friends of the Earth International to the Marine Environment Protection Committee. A group of seven European nations also proposed stronger air pollution standards in papers submitted to the IMO.

As the IMO convened environmental meetings the week of July 18, activists released the first-ever Environmental Report Card on the IMO giving it failing grades on air pollution, human health and climate change. Community groups offered a Port Community Bill of Rights to protect people living near ports from air toxics and quality of life impacts caused by air pollution from ships, which is increasing as global trade expands.

Ships generate 30 percent of the world's smog-forming nitrogen oxide emissions. One ship entering port generates the air pollution of 350,000 cars in one hour. Shipping trade is expected to triple in the next two decades. People living near ports experience higher levels of cancer, asthma and respiratory illness.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

JULY 22, 2005

2:10 PM CONTACT: Blue Water Network

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