

SUMMARY

This quarterly report is the 55th in a series concerning safety and environmental protection matters related to ports and shipping. Highlights include:

1. The 44th session of the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 44) of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) was held at IMO Headquarters in London during the period of March 6-13, 2000. MEPC 44 addressed such important issues as: (a) harmful effects of the use of anti-fouling paints for ships; (b) harmful aquatic organisms in ballast water; (c) inadequacy of reception facilities; (d) identification and protection of Special Areas and Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas; (e) prevention of air pollution from ships; (f) interpretations and amendments of the 1973 International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, as modified by the Protocol of 1978, as amended, (MARPOL 73/78), and related codes; (g) promotion of implementation and enforcement of MARPOL 73/78 and related codes; and (h) recycling (scrapping) of ships. (Item 1-F)

Major actions taken at MEPC 44 include: (a) adoption of an amendment to Annex III of MARPOL 73/78 regarding the deletion of tainting of seafood as a criterion for determining a marine pollutant; (b) approval of amendments to Annex V of MARPOL 73/78 regarding the prohibition on the disposal at sea of waste ash from incineration of plastics containing heavy metals or toxic materials; (c) significant progress in the development of a legally binding international instrument for anti-fouling systems on ships; (d) agreement in principle on the basic concepts for a legally binding international instrument on ballast water management; (e) agreement to include recycling (scrapping) of ships on the Committee's work program; (f) approval of guidelines for ensuring the adequacy of port reception facilities for ships' wastes; and (g) approval of an amendment to Annex VI of MARPOL 73/78 to include the North Sea as a SO_x emission control area.

2. On December 29, 1999, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published a final rule (40 CFR parts 89, 92, and 94) establishing an emission control program for new marine diesel engines rated at or above 37 kilowatts (kW). The affected engines are used for propulsion and auxiliary purposes in a wide variety of marine applications. The standards will lead to significant reduction in oxides and nitrogen and particulate matter emissions from this source. When combined with other mobile source emission control programs, this program will help provide long-term improvements in air quality in many port cities and other coastal areas. Overall, these emission standards provide much needed assistance to states facing ozone and particulate air quality problems, which can cause a range of adverse health effects for their residents, especially in terms of respiratory impairment and related illnesses. Regulated entities include manufacturers of new marine diesel engines, manufacturers of marine vessels or other equipment using such engines, and companies that rebuild or maintain these engines. (Item 3-A)

3. On January 13, 2000, the Maritime Administration (MARAD), U.S. Department of Transportation, announced the establishment of the Marine Transportation System National Advisory Council (MTSNAC). The MTSNAC will advise the Secretary of Transportation, via the Council Sponsor (the MARAD Administrator) and the Interagency Committee on the Marine Transportation System (ICMTS), on matters relating to the Marine Transportation System (MTS) – waterways, ports, and their intermodal connections. The MTSNAC will consider matters relating to current and future MTS needs. The Council will be composed of representatives from not more than 30 non-federal organizations from the marine transportation industry as designated by the Secretary of Transportation. The Council is an advisory body and will not develop regulations, formulate policy, or determine federal budget priorities. (Item 4-G)

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