

## SUMMARY

This quarterly report is the 71<sup>st</sup> in a series concerning safety and environmental protection matters related to ports and shipping. Highlights are:

1. The International Conference on Ballast Water Management for Ships was held at International Maritime Organization (IMO) Headquarters in London from February 9-13, 2004. The Conference adopted a new international convention to prevent, minimize, and ultimately eliminate the risks to the environment, human health, property, and resources arising from the transfer of harmful aquatic organisms and pathogens through the control and management of ships' ballast water and sediments, as well as to avoid unwanted side effects from that control and to encourage developments in related knowledge and technology. The new International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments will enter into force 12 months after the date on which not less than 30 states, the combined merchant fleets of which constitute not less than 35 percent of the gross tonnage of the world's merchant shipping, have either signed it without reservation as to ratification, acceptance, or approval, or have deposited with the IMO the requisite instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval, or accession. (Item 1-C)
2. The U.S. General Accounting Office has published a report titled *Freight Transportation: Strategies Needed to Address Planning and Financing Limitations*. The strong productivity gains in the U.S. economy have hinged in part on transportation networks working more efficiently. The nation's ports, which handle 95 percent of overseas freight tonnage, are a key link in this network, and efficient intermodal links between ship, rail, and highways are vital to continued productivity gains. The report addresses: (a) the challenges to freight mobility; (b) the limitations that key stakeholders have encountered in addressing these challenges; and (c) strategies that may aid decision makers in enhancing freight mobility. (Item 3-A)
3. The U.S. Coast Guard announced on January 7, 2004, an innovative program concerning the installation and testing aboard vessels of experimental ballast water treatment systems. This program will facilitate development of effective ballast water treatment technology, which will create more options for vessels seeking alternatives to ballast water exchange. (Item 3-B)
4. The Transportation Research Board of the National Research Council has issued a report titled *The Marine Transportation System and the Federal Role: Measuring Performance, Targeting Improvement*. The Marine Transportation System (MTS) encompasses not only the vessels, waterways, navigation aids, ports, and other traditional components of the marine sector, but also their connections to other modes of transportation, both public and private. In this report, the MTS is examined in the broader context of its role in the freight system, but with a focus on the federal government's role in supplying, financing, operating, and regulating the infrastructure and services that support the system's efficient use in the public interest. (Item 3-D)

5. The IMO recently issued Assembly resolution A.962(23), dated March 4, 2004, and titled *IMO Guidelines on Ship Recycling*. The resolution, which was adopted on December 5, 2003: (a) adopts the IMO guidelines on ship recycling set out in the annex to the resolution; (b) invites governments to take urgent action to apply the annexed guidelines; (c) requests the IMO Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) to keep this matter under review with a view to further developing the guidelines in the future; (d) requests further that the MEPC consider the most appropriate means to promote the implementation of the guidelines; and (e) urges the MEPC to continue cooperating with the International Labor Organization and the appropriate bodies of the Basel Convention in this field and to encourage the involvement of other stakeholders. (Item 3-E)

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