

## SUMMARY

This quarterly report is the 73<sup>rd</sup> and last in a series concerning safety and environmental protection matters related to ports and shipping. Highlights are:

1. The 31<sup>st</sup> session of the Facilitation Committee (FAL 31) of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) was held at IMO Headquarters in London from July 19-23, 2004. Significant actions taken at FAL 31 include: (a) approval of various amendments to the Convention on Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic (FAL Convention) after considering the recommendations of a working group; (b) establishment of a correspondence group to develop an explanatory manual for the FAL Convention; (c) approval of the draft amendments to the Annex to the FAL Convention related to treatment of persons rescued at sea; and (d) agreement with the working group on ship/port interface regarding several issues. (Item 1-B)
2. The 52<sup>nd</sup> session of the IMO Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 52) was held at IMO Headquarters in London from October 11-15, 2004. Significant actions taken at MEPC 52 include the following: (a) adoption of amendments to Annex I (oil) of the 1973 International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, as modified by the Protocol of 1978, as amended, (MARPOL); (b) adoption of amendments to MARPOL Annex II (noxious liquid substances in bulk); (c) adoption of amendments to the International Bulk Chemical Code to conform to the amendments to MARPOL Annex II; (d) significant progress on the development of guidelines under the 2004 International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments; (e) agreement to the final designation of the Western European Waters Particularly Sensitive Sea Area; (f) agreement to forward the issue of compulsory pilotage in the Torres Strait to the Legal Committee; (g) adoption of guidelines for the development of the ship recycling plan; (h) approval of amendments to MARPOL Annex VI (prevention of air pollution) with a view to adoption at MEPC 53; (i) agreement to postpone until MEPC 53 a decision on whether IMO action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from ships should be taken by all countries or just developed countries; and (j) agreement for the United States to continue development of guidelines on cooperation for enforcement regarding deliberate discharges in contravention of MARPOL. (Item 1-E)
3. The Coast Guard, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, has issued a final rule that requires mandatory ballast water management practices for all vessels equipped with ballast tanks bound for ports or places within the United States or entering U.S. waters. This rule increases the Coast Guard's ability to protect U.S. waters against the unintentional introduction of nonindigenous species via ballast water discharges, which have had significant impacts on the nation's marine and freshwater resources, biological diversity, and coastal infrastructure. (Item 3-E)
4. The Coast Guard, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, has published a Navigation and Vessel Inspection Circular (NVIC) titled *Ballast Water Management for the Control of Aquatic Nuisance Species in the Waters of the United States*. This NVIC provides guidance

for Coast Guard personnel, vessel owners and operators, shipping agents, and persons-in-charge concerning compliance with, and enforcement of, the U.S. Coast Guard's Ballast Water Management Program. (Item 1-A)

5. The U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy has released its report titled *An Ocean Blueprint for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. The report contains the Commission's final recommendations for a new, comprehensive national ocean policy. Issues addressed include: the oceans as a national asset; a new national ocean policy framework; ocean stewardship and the importance of education and public awareness; economic growth and resource conservation along the coast; coastal and ocean water quality; enhancing the use and protection of ocean resources; science-based decisions and advancing understanding of the oceans; the global ocean and U.S. participation in international policy; and implementing a new national ocean policy. (Item 4-D)

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