

COUNCIL MEMBERS' MOTION

3. Protecting BC Coasts From Acidic Washwater Dumping

Submitted by: Councillor Fry

WHEREAS

1. In order to mitigate sulphur air pollution from burning heavy oil, the maritime shipping industry employs Exhaust Gas Cleaning Systems (scrubbers) which result in a washwater solution of concentrated acidic sulphates, metals, and other toxins. Cruise, cargo, and other vessel traffic in Canadian jurisdiction annually discharge tens of millions tonnes of this acidic washwater directly into BC's Coastal waters.
2. Globally, the issue of scrubber discharge ¹ is a growing concern. The International Council on Clean Transportation report of April 29, 2021 ² makes clear that scrubber effluent creates pollution that causes harm to the ocean, both locally and on an international scale. That same report found that Vancouver was the fourth most dumped upon port globally.
3. Ocean acidification is of major concern to coastal communities, particularly those coastal communities encouraging shellfish harvesting, aquaculture, tourism, and commercial and recreational fisheries. Worldwide, authorities have variously banned or are moving to limit the dumping of scrubber wash in coastal waters. On the Pacific Coast of North America, California and Washington ^{3,4} have implemented stricter protections, and on March 1, 2022 the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority ⁵ intend to introduce phase one (of three) of new exhaust gas cleaning systems wash water discharge requirements within its jurisdiction after conclusive findings showed negative effects on aqualife and concentrations of metals that exceeded thresholds.
4. Pacific Canada is one of the most diverse and productive marine environments in the world. The Province of British Columbia has recently committed ⁶ to develop a new coastal marine strategy – in cooperation with the federal government, Indigenous peoples, and coastal communities – to provide a blueprint for future stewardship, economic resilience and management of our coastal waters.
5. In January 2022, Vancouver City Council affirmed support for the Year of the Salish Sea and recognized that “the Salish Sea is witnessing devastating biodiversity loss, namely the risk of extinction of over 100 species of birds, fish, invertebrates, mammals, and key species including Salmon and the Southern Resident Killer Whales.” ⁷

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT the following resolution be submitted to the LMLGA and UBCM for consideration at their respective policy conventions:

WHEREAS in order to mitigate sulphur air pollution from burning heavy oil, the maritime shipping industry employs exhaust gas cleaning systems (scrubbers) which result in a solution of concentrated acidic sulphates, metals, and other toxins. Cruise and cargo vessel traffic in Canadian jurisdiction annually discharge tens of millions tonnes of this acidic washwater directly into BC's Coastal waters;

AND WHEREAS ocean acidification is of major concern to coastal communities, particularly those coastal communities encouraging shellfish harvesting, aquaculture, tourism, and commercial and recreational fisheries. Worldwide, authorities have variously banned or are moving to limit the dumping of scrubber wash in coastal waters. On the Pacific Coast of North America, California and Washington have implemented stricter protections, and on March 1st, 2022 the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority will introduce phase one (of three) of new exhaust gas cleaning systems washwater discharge requirements in its jurisdiction after conclusive findings showed negative effects on aqualife and concentrations of metals that exceeded safe thresholds:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT UBCM request the BC government commit to advocate to the federal government on the issue of exhaust gas cleaning systems' acidic wastewater discharge, as part of a comprehensive BC Coastal Marine Strategy; pushing for stronger environmental protections, in line with thriving cruise and cargo waters of our US neighbours, to include preventative measures to stop scrubber dumping from ships and require cleaner fuels be used.

- B. THAT Council send a letter directly to the Minister of Transport, the honourable Omar Alghabra, asking Transport Canada to take action on dumping from vessels including exhaust gas cleaning systems effluent and washwater dumping as part of any plan to encourage growth and increase numbers of large vessels transiting through or coming to Canadian jurisdiction.
- C. THAT Council send a letter directly to the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority in support of their new exhaust gas cleaning systems washwater discharge requirements, and in encouragement of the Port's transition to greening the industry through shore power, rolling truck age program and further strengthened regulations to include all washwater discharge and eventually prohibiting the use of scrubbers.

BACKGROUND

1. International Council for the Exploration of the Sea Viewpoint on Scrubber Discharges and the dangers they pose to marine ecosystems, including plankton mortality: <https://www.ices.dk/news-and-events/news-archive/news/Pages/ViewpointSSDW.aspx> [ices.dk]
2. ICCT report: <https://theicct.org/publications/global-scrubber-discharges-Apr2021> [theicct.org]
3. Media coverage of Port of Seattle and Washington State Department of Ecology temporary pause on scrubber discharges: <https://shipandbunker.com/news/am/930278-washington-state-proposes-temporary-puget-sound-scrubber-discharge-ban> [shipandbunker.com]
4. Washington State decision that Scrubber Washwater does not meet water quality standards for acidity or metals: https://www.ezview.wa.gov/Portals/_1962/Documents/CruiseShip/2018%20Annual%20Meeting%20Presentation%20EGCS%204-2-19%20updated%20data.pdf [ezview.wa.gov]
5. <https://www.portvancouver.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/2021-11-24-Notice-of-Amendment-Port-Information-Guide.pdf>
6. Marine Plan Partnership for the North Pacific Coast (MaPP) <http://mappocean.org/>
7. Year of the Salish Sea: <https://council.vancouver.ca/20220125/documents/b8.pdf>

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