



Port Welcomes New State Rule on Cleaner Ship Fuel

Ocean vessels to burn low-sulfur fuel starting Jan. 1

December 22, 2006

Port of Long Beach officials this week praised a new state rule on cleaner-burning ship fuel, which is set to take effect January 1, 2007.

The new regulation, adopted by the California Air Resources Board in 2005, requires large ocean-going vessels, including container and cruise ships, to use low-sulfur fuels in their auxiliary engines within 24 nautical miles of the California coastline. The regulation will reduce emissions of harmful diesel particulate matter (PM), smog-forming nitrogen oxides (NOx) and sulfur oxide (SOx).

“This is a significant step forward for cleaner air,” said Harbor Commission President James C. Hankla. “To achieve greater emissions reductions we count on our state partners, such as CARB, to set and enforce standards. We applaud CARB for taking this crucial step.”

The new regulation will address emissions from ships operating near shore and at berth. Auxiliary engines are used to provide electricity for ship operations such as lighting, cooling and other on-board functions.

The new cleaner-fuel regulation is an important interim step while the Port of Long Beach implements shore-side electricity for ships at berth as well as its own, more stringent low-sulfur fuel requirements, Hankla noted. Under the San Pedro Bay Ports Clean Air Action Plan, a comprehensive strategy to reduce air pollution from all port-related sources, the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles have committed to provide shoreside electrical power, enabling ships to shut down their auxiliary engines entirely.

According to CARB, the regulations will bring about immediate emissions reductions from ships’ auxiliary engines. About 75 percent of ocean-going vessels now use a dirtier grade of diesel fuel in their auxiliary engines. From those ships’ auxiliary engines, the new regulations will result in a 75 percent reduction in PM, 80 percent reduction in SOx, and 6 percent reduction in NOx, according to CARB.

Under the new regulations, ships must use fuels with sulfur content at or below 0.5 percent. By January 1, 2010, the maximum allowable sulfur content will be 0.1 percent. Vessel operators must maintain meticulous records and will be subject to state fines for non-compliance.

Contact: Art Wong, Port of Long Beach Assistant Director of Communications/Public Information Officer, (562) 590-4123, (562) 619-5665 (cell), or wong@polb.com.