



Green Flag Air Quality Compliance Tops 80 percent in 2006 Ocean Carriers to Earn Discounted Fees, Environmental Awards

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Compliance with the Port's Green Flag air quality program reached nearly 82 percent in 2006, an increase of more than 13 percent from the previous year, according to preliminary figures.

As a result, nearly half of all vessel operators will receive discounted dockage fees in 2007 to reward their compliance with the voluntary Green Flag program. Under the program, the Port offers environmental awards and discounted dockage fees to ships and vessel operators who consistently slow down ship speeds near Long Beach, which reduces air pollution.

"It's very encouraging to see so many of our partners stepping forward voluntarily to reduce their ships speeds and cut air pollution," said Harbor Commission President James C. Hankla. "This program really demonstrates how the Port and its industry partners can cooperate to achieve environmental progress."

The Green Flag Incentive Program was approved by the Harbor Commission in 2005 in an effort boost compliance with the Voluntary Vessel Speed Reduction Program. The board approved as much as \$2.2 million a year in discounted dockage fees for ocean carriers that achieved high rates of compliance with the program.

Carriers with a compliance rate of 90 percent or better in 2006 -- 120 in total -- will receive reduced dockage rates in 2007.

According to the preliminary figures, 507 individual ships (out of 910) qualified for "Green Flag" environmental awards in 2006 with 100 percent compliance. In 2005, 333 ships earned that distinction.

Among the 120 ocean carriers with the highest rates of compliance are almost all of the Port's most frequent visitors. Of the carriers with more than 200 ship visits during the year, five qualified for the discount: China Ocean Shipping Co. (COSCO), Carnival, Hanjin Shipping, "K" Line and Mediterranean Shipping Co. (MSC). Among the most frequent visitors, "K" Line had the highest overall compliance rate with 99 percent. Hanjin had the most individual ships in compliance for the year, with 398.

The goal of the Port's Green Flag Program is to raise compliance to 100 percent, which would reduce about 550 tons of smog-forming Nitrogen Oxides every year. Under the program, ships are asked to slow down to 12 knots or less within 20 nautical miles of the harbor.

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