



Secretary John Kerry, Special Presidential Envoy for Climate
U.S. Department of State

Jeffrey G. Lantz, Director of Commercial Regulations and Standards
U.S. Head of Delegation to the International Maritime Organization
U.S. Coast Guard

June 2, 2022

RE: Port support for strong greenhouse gas reduction measures at MEPC 78

Secretary Kerry and Mr. Lantz,

On behalf of The Northwest Seaport Alliance, the Port of Tacoma, and the Port of Seattle, we write in support of efforts of the U.S. Delegation to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to secure consensus around an accelerated greenhouse gas emission reduction strategy at the upcoming meeting of the IMO's Marine Environment Protection Committee beginning on June 6 (MEPC 78).

Global support is growing for the maritime sector's transition towards total decarbonization by 2050. We support the United States' position to accelerate the IMO's level of ambition to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from ships by setting interim targets for 2030 and 2040. As part of the process of increasing the IMO's level of ambition, we support the IMO implementing market-based mechanisms and other policies as soon as possible, to achieve mid- and long-term greenhouse gas reductions and incentivize the development and deployment of cleaner marine fuels. A clean fuel standard, for instance, could promote development of, and scale the market for, low- and zero-carbon fuel alternatives to better compete with fossil fuels. Here on the West Coast of the U.S., the states of Washington, Oregon, and California are developing, or have already implemented, a low carbon fuel standard and a market for emission reduction credits to incentivize the transition to cleaner transportation fuels.

U.S. leadership is important to achieve consensus around an accelerated shipping decarbonization goal. We appreciate the Biden Administration's support for enhancing domestic maritime electrification infrastructure and for research on alternative fuel pathways. These investments will help support local industry and ports to form partnerships, domestically and internationally, and to work towards demonstrating zero emission shipping and port technology. For example, the Port of Seattle recently announced a partnership to explore a Pacific Northwest Green Corridor, initially focused on cruise ships between Washington State, British Columbia, Canada, and Alaska. We look forward to updating the U.S. Delegation on the status of the partnership and feasibility assessment as it progresses.

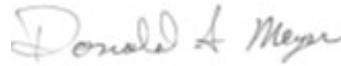
Some of our other priorities at MEPC 78 include approving the work plan for review of the underwater noise guidelines. We appreciate the U.S. Delegation reaching out for our feedback on the working group's revisions, and we encourage the U.S. to take a strong position on measures that increase the uptake of underwater noise guidelines, once revised, as well as potential additional measures to reduce the impacts of underwater noise from ships on marine species.

Finally, we support approval of the MEPC circular regarding 2022 guidelines for risk and impact assessments for discharge of wash water from exhaust gas cleaning systems, and for jurisdictions to make decisions about whether to restrict discharge from their waters. In 2021, the Port of Seattle worked with cruise lines to pause discharging exhaust gas wash water into the Puget Sound, and – in partnership with the Washington State Department of Ecology and Cruise Lines International Association – have engaged a reputable, independent research team to study the impacts of cruise ships’ exhaust gas cleaning system wash water on Puget Sound’s water quality to help guide future decisions about the need for environmental protections in our region. The study is expected to commence this summer and, once complete, we look forward to sharing the findings with the Delegation.

Thank you for your work to reduce maritime impacts internationally. We look forward to our continuing collaboration with the U.S. Delegation and the Biden Administration to achieve our shared goals of decarbonizing maritime transportation.



Commissioner Ryan Calkins
President
Port of Seattle Commission



Commissioner Don Meyer
President
Port of Tacoma Commission