

EPA to Study Sulfur Limit Impact on Shipping

July 19, 2018

On July 30, 2018, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will host a workshop to engage stakeholders in a discussion surrounding the development of a study of the economic impacts of compliance with the North American Emission Control Area (ECA). The announcement follows concerns expressed by the Senate that the ECA disproportionately impacted vessels operating at less than 32,000 horsepower and more than 50 miles off the coastline. The ECA was established by amendment to Annex VI of MARPOL on January 1, 2015, to limit sulfur content in diesel fuel of shipping vessels to one-tenth of what it had been prior to the ECA. While the initial cost/benefit analysis conducted for the ECA estimated that the overall benefits to human and marine ecosystems far outweighed the costs of implementation, the study will examine whether the increased vessel operating costs are causing “some shippers to shift from marine-based transport to less efficient, higher emitting modes.”

According to the Federal Register [Notice](#), at the workshop, the EPA will host stakeholders to determine methodology and integral data for the study, as well as consider multimodal alternatives. Stakeholder input is critical to collect essential data, including ship characteristics and routes. The final report is expected in fiscal year 2020.

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