

News

Ship Emissions - Vancouver Port Authority's Approach is Irresponsible

In a press release dated March 30, 2007, Vancouver Port Authority announced a new program which will charge fees to ships according to how much they pollute. This flawed and irresponsible approach to addressing air pollution problems indicates acceptance of those ships burning dirty, cheap fuels as long as they are willing to pay for the privilege to pollute the Lower Mainland air shed.

Marine emissions in the Georgia Strait and the ports in Vancouver Harbour and Deltaport are one of the largest sources of CO² in the Lower Mainland. Rather than insisting that the ships visiting Vancouver's ports burn the cleanest fuels possible VPA plans to levy fees. According to their press release:

" The differentiated rates are designed to provide a wide variety of technology and fuel options to vessels in order to promote and build awareness around a number of alternative emission reduction practices."

Rick Bryant, president of the Chamber of Shipping is reported in the Vancouver Sun on March 31 as saying that these fees are " *A bit more like a T-shirt or a pat on the back than a financial incentive*".

The fee differential is so small that it is unlikely to discourage any ships from stopping using the cheap dirty burning fuel they use today. **In fact it may encourage these ships to visit Vancouver - where they are given permission to pollute - rather than US ports like Los Angeles where they are taking much stronger measures to reduce ship emissions at their ports and in surrounding waters.** So as the USA tightens up on its air pollution, ship operators may look at Vancouver as a safe haven where their pollution is welcomed in exchange for paying a small fee.

How much is the air quality of the Lower Mainland and its residents worth? Not much according to Vancouver Port Authority and their air emissions propaganda.