

Dirty Fossil Fuel ‘Business-As-Usual’ Tactics Spew Out of the IMO at COP22

Climate and pollution news almost never mention shipping by sea. But the 90,000 oil-burning ships in the world are still not covered in a climate agreement.

SANTA CRUZ, CALIFORNIA, USA, November 14, 2016 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [This position summary by Sail Transport Network and SAIL MED is at the United Nations climate meeting in Marrakech.]

Since the UN climate meeting in 1997 in Kyoto, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) eagerly took on the responsibility to reduce shipping’s GHG emissions. The Paris Agreement further kept the IMO in control of maritime GHG emissions, rather than incorporating them into state obligations. Now, we see a continual let down by the IMO going into the UNFCCC COP22 discussions in Marrakech, Morocco.

The IMO has created a 3-step approach with a vague timeline that starts with a data collection system and then bounces monitoring and reporting responsibilities to mostly “Flags of Convenience” States and the production of an anonymized database that may lead to more reports and meetings and possibly some action some time in the future, maybe. No significant CO2 reduction strategies, obligations, penalties or support for clean energy technologies in the global maritime industry have been created.

How does this work? Let’s analyze key parts of the IMO’s briefing paper from the Marine Environment Protection Committee’s 70th Session in October that the IMO is armed with at COP22, “New requirements for international shipping as UN body continues to address greenhouse gas emissions”:

“Under the new requirements, ships of 5,000 gross tonnage and above will have to collect consumption data for each type of fuel oil they use, as well as other, additional, specified data including proxies for transport work.”

This statement means that there has been no reporting from ships regarding the myriad of fossil fuels they consume. The industry has been polluting without transparency, accountability or scientific analysis.

“The new mandatory data collection system is intended to be the first in a three-step approach ... This would allow a decision to be made on whether any further measures are needed to enhance energy efficiency and address greenhouse gas emissions from international shipping. If so, proposed policy options would then be considered.”

The IMO’s new reporting requirements are only a first step in a new 3-step approach that is to include future discussions. How much longer can we allow the IMO to proceed with such a vague process that still punts into the future action that may be taken to address climate change someday?

The shipping industry needs to clean up its CO2 emissions now. The IMO’s own Third IMO Greenhouse Gas Study 2014 report stated that by 2050, CO2 emissions from international shipping

could grow by between 50 percent and 250 percent, depending on future economic growth and energy developments.

Global consumption practices, if unaltered, will also continue to demand even more ships in the water. A vessel built today is likely to be traversing our seas for 20-30 years. By dragging its feet, the IMO is setting a dangerous long-term trajectory for CO2 emissions and deadly pollution.

“Under the new data collection system, aggregated data will be reported to a ship’s flag State after the end of each calendar year. The flag State, having determined that the data has been reported in accordance with the requirements, will issue a Statement of Compliance to the ship. Flag States will be required to subsequently transfer this data to the IMO Ship Fuel Oil Consumption Database.”

To read this section, it is important to know what is a flag State. The industry allows ship owners to register vessels in states offering the least amount of resistance or enforcement burdens. These states are known as “Flags of Convenience” (FOC) states and are notoriously known for disregarding environmental and labor laws and regulations...

“The IMO Secretariat would be required to produce an annual report to IMO’s MEPC, summarizing the data collected. Data would be anonymized so individual ship data would not be recognized.”

This means even more reports before any action will happen. Also, why should the data be anonymized? Shouldn’t dirty polluters be disclosed to the public? Why is the industry protecting companies who pollute our seas and air and also cause deaths?

The IMO's Lim said, 'IMO will inform the next Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change...'

Where is the "breakthrough" and "tangible progress?"

- <http://www.SailTransportNetwork.org> (for complete release.)

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