



September 27, 2005

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden  
U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510-6225

Re: Support Ratification of Annex VI of MARPOL 73/78 – Air Pollution from Ships – Treaty Doc. 108-7

Dear Senator Biden,

Bluewater Network is writing to urge you to support ratification of Annex VI of MARPOL 73/78, the international treaty on preventing air pollution from ships. The treaty limits smog-producing nitrogen oxide emissions from engines on board large ocean-going commercial marine vessels and sets caps on the sulfur content of marine bunker fuel. MARPOL Annex VI went into force in May 2005 after it was ratified by a majority of nations representing the world's greatest shipping tonnage.

U. S. ratification is urgent because global shipping volume is projected to double or triple over the next 10 to 20 years. Along with this growth comes accelerated air pollution in port communities and coastal regions. Ship emissions constitute a growing source of air pollution and are becoming a greater portion of overall air emissions as other mobile and stationary sources become cleaner.

Ratification of MARPOL Annex VI is supported widely by U. S. environmental, community, and public health groups, ports and the shipping industry because it sets a worldwide benchmark for ship emissions and provides mechanisms for improving marine engine emissions and fuels standards.

Diesel exhaust produced by marine engines is a known or suspected carcinogen and is a cause of illness such as asthma and other respiratory illnesses. Because the diesel engines on board ocean-going vessels are operated without air pollution controls, they produce large volumes of deadly diesel exhaust every day. People in port communities experience higher incidence of illness and premature death due to diesel exhaust from ships, port operations and goods movement.

Ratification of Annex VI is a critical component of national and state strategies to achieving emissions reductions from ocean-going vessels. While the standards contained in Annex VI will not significantly reduce shipping air pollution, it provides the mechanism to require ships to burn cleaner lower-sulfur fuels in areas that are designated "Sulfur Emissions Control Areas (SECAs)." By using cleaner fuels, ocean-going vessels can significantly reduce air pollution.

At the July 2005 meeting of the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) Marine Environmental Protection Committee in London, nations agreed to reopen for negotiations the engine emissions and marine fuels provisions of Annex VI. U. S. ratification of the treaty at this time will strengthen the leadership position of our national delegation to the IMO during this process.

Bluewater Network – a division of Friends of the Earth – works to stop environmental damage from vehicles and vessels, and to protect human health and the planet by reducing dependence on fossil fuels. Thank you for your consideration of our views. Please contact me directly if you would like additional information or have questions.

Sincerely yours,

Teri Shore  
Clean Vessels Campaign Director

**Bluewater Network—a division of Friends of the Earth** • 311 California, Suite 510, San Francisco, CA 94104  
T: (415) 544-0790 F: (415) 544-0796 [bluewater@bluewaternetwork.org](mailto:bluewater@bluewaternetwork.org) [www.bluewaternetwork.org](http://www.bluewaternetwork.org)

**Friends of the Earth** • 1717 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Suite 600, Washington, D.C. 20036-2002  
T: (202) 783-7400 F: (202) 783-0444 [foe@foe.org](mailto:foe@foe.org) [www.foe.org](http://www.foe.org)