



WORLD OCEAN COUNCIL

*The International Cross-Sectoral Industry Leadership Alliance
for Ocean Sustainability*

News Release

OCEAN INDUSTRIES CALL ON GOVERNMENTS TO FINALIZE TREATY CONTROLLING MARINE INVASIVE SPECIES FROM BALLAST WATER

The World Ocean Council, Shipping, Fisheries, Aquaculture, and Desalination Industries Call for Ratification of the Ballast Water Convention

26 October 2010 –

To control the spread of marine invasive species through ballast water, governments approved an international treaty in 2004 - but the global regulations are still not in force due to the lack of a few government ratifications. The shipping industry is ready to employ the technologies and practices required to address this serious threat to ocean ecosystems. In the meantime, marine biodiversity - and ocean industries such as aquaculture, fisheries and desalination - continue to be exposed to the impacts of alien species introductions.

As governments meet this week in Nagoya, Japan to consider the new strategy and targets for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the World Ocean Council (WOC), the shipping industry and other ocean industries call on governments to ratify the Ballast Water Convention as a matter of the highest priority.

The ballast water of cargo ships transports 7,000 - 10,000 marine species each day across the oceans, creating a major pathway for marine invasive species. The economic, social, recreational, and ecological losses/costs can be enormous. For example, zebra mussels accidentally introduced to the Great Lakes cause an estimated US \$5 billion in damages to water pipes, boat hulls, and other hard surfaces.

The Ballast Water Management Convention was adopted in 2004 under the auspices of the International Maritime Organization (IMO). The Convention will enter into force after ratification by 30 nations, representing 35% of the world merchant shipping tonnage. To date, 26 States have ratified the Convention, comprising 24.66% of the world total merchant shipping tonnage.

The IMO Secretary General, Efthimios Mitropoulos, said that "Invasive species are widely seen as one of the major threats to global biodiversity" and that the Ballast Water Management Convention "aims at establishing a realistic target for the eradication of invasive species and for putting in place mechanisms to control the pathways for their introduction". He emphasized that government efforts are needed to protect the marine environment by ensuring this important Convention "ratified without further delay".

Peter Hinchliffe, Secretary General of the International Chamber of Shipping (a World Ocean Council member), stated unequivocally that, "The international shipping community is ready and willing to play its part in implementing the Ballast Water Management Convention. We urge governments to ratify the treaty. Our industry is committed to removing this threat to marine biodiversity and reducing the impacts of marine invasive species on other ocean users".

In the aquaculture industry, John Holmyard, owner of Offshore Shellfish, stressed that governments must act on this treaty to protect food security, "Aquaculture provides around half of the world's seafood. Invasive species in ballast water can affect finfish, shellfish and seaweed culture and destroy entire regional aquaculture industries. These invaders include pathogens and parasites, as well as species that smother equipment and compete for food. Once established they can be impossible to eradicate. Stopping their introduction is the only practical way of preventing this impact on the capacity of aquaculture to provide the world's current and future seafood needs."

“Numerous fisheries around the world have been severely impacted by marine invasive species”, noted Paul Holthus, WOC Executive Director. “In the Black Sea, the introduced comb jelly caused the collapse of the anchovy, sprat and other fisheries worth hundreds of millions of dollars a year. In Australia, newly arrived dinoflagellates cause paralytic shellfish poisoning and have harmed local shellfish industries, while an introduced starfish is reaching 'plague' proportions and feeding on commercially valuable scallop, oyster and clam species.”

Lisa Henthorne, director and past president of the International Desalination Association (IDA), and co-chair of IDA's Environmental Task Force, said, "Taking measures to safeguard the health of our oceans is a vitally important and shared responsibility. It is crucial that everyone who uses our oceans – as a source of drinking water for our thirsty planet, to produce energy, or to facilitate commerce – works together to preserve the quality of these waters not only for today, but also for future generations”. Patricia Burke, IDA Secretary General, added that, “Aggressive marine invasive species that colonize and block intake and discharge pipes would create enormous cost and disruption to desalination plants. This must be avoided by preventing the introduction of alien species through ballast water.”

The impact of marine invasive species on marine biodiversity, ecosystems, food security, and economic activities is clear. The shipping industry is ready to implement the IMO Ballast Water Management Convention. The time for governments to act is now - 2010 International Year of Biodiversity.

The WOC is working with the IMO, CBD, and other UN organizations to advance ocean industry leadership in addressing marine biodiversity protection. As noted by the UN Secretary-General in his 2010 Report on Oceans and the Law of the Sea, there is a need to “create awareness and understanding among industry of the ecosystem approach, marine biodiversity and marine spatial planning; develop regional ocean business councils; and strengthen efforts to create a global cross-sectoral industry alliance to constructively engage in United Nations and other international processes relevant to oceans, through organizations such as the World Ocean Council.”

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

The World Ocean Council is the international, cross-sectoral industry alliance for private sector leadership and collaboration in ocean stewardship. Membership is open to ocean industries committed to addressing the challenges of Corporate Ocean Responsibility. Companies and associations worldwide are distinguishing themselves as sustainability leaders by joining the WOC as Founding Members in 2009/2010.

WOC members to date include almost 30 leading companies and associations from a wide range of ocean industries: oil and gas, shipping, marine science, ocean technology, seafood, tourism, maritime law, marine environmental services and others.

Contact: Paul Holthus +1 (808) 277-9008 paul.holthus@oceancouncil.org Web: www.oceancouncil.org