



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Slowing ships down for cleaner air and whale protection Six global shipping companies to participate in trial incentive program for Santa Barbara Channel**

SANTA BARBARA, Calif. — A coalition of government, non-profit and marine industry groups today announced the launch of a new trial incentive program to slow ships down in the Santa Barbara Channel in an effort to reduce air pollution and increase protection of endangered whales.

Six global shipping companies, COSCO, Hapag Lloyd, K Line, Maersk Line, Matson, and United Arab Shipping Company are participating in the speed reduction incentive program from July through October. Selected ships in their fleet will reduce their speed to 12 knots or less (reduced from typical speeds of 14-18 knots) as they travel between Point Conception and the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach. Each company will receive \$2,500 per vessel that passes through the Santa Barbara Channel.

The trial program is modeled after similar, successful programs at the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles, where 90 percent of shipping lines participate. The Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District, NOAA's Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary and the Environmental Defense Center worked to develop and implement the program.

Ship strikes are a major threat to recovering endangered whale populations. The ships also emit greenhouse gases and air pollutants, and account for more than 50 percent of ozone-forming nitrogen oxides in Santa Barbara County.

"Few people realize that ships off our coast, especially those moving at faster speeds, are a risk to endangered whales and the quality of the air we breathe," said Kristi Birney of the Environmental Defense Center.

"Reducing ship speeds to 12 knots or less reduces emissions of smog-forming air pollutants that harm our health," said Dave Van Mullem, director, Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District. "We are pleased to be part of this partnership to achieve common goals, and excited about the potential for improving air quality in our county."

"Slowing ships down reduces the likelihood that a ship strike on a whale will be fatal," said Chris Moble, superintendent, Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary. "We are extremely pleased with

the positive response from the shipping industry to test non-regulatory, innovative approaches to protect human health and the marine environment while maintaining vibrant maritime commerce.”

The program has funding to support 16 transits and the initial response has been extremely positive. The coalition received more than 25 ship transit requests to be included in the trial and is seeking additional funding to expand the trial.

“The Pacific Merchant Shipping Association is committed to finding viable science-based solutions to both air quality and whale protection issues,” said TL Garrett, vice president, Pacific Merchant Shipping Association. “Our members are participating in this voluntary program in order to find sustainable strategies to reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emission while providing enhanced protection for the whales off our coasts.”

Maersk Line representative, Dr. Lee Kindberg, director, Environment & Sustainability, North America, added, “The Santa Barbara Channel program is a logical extension of our other environmental initiatives. We appreciate this opportunity to help demonstrate the environmental and operational impacts of speed reductions in sensitive areas.”

The vessel speed program is supported by local and national foundations. The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation will manage the incentive payments with funding from the Santa Barbara Foundation and the Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District. Payments will be provided upon verification of the ships’ speeds through the Channel, using Automatic Identification System monitors that receive speed and location data from the transponders on ships as they transit.

For additional information, see attached factsheet and map, or visit:

<http://www.OurAir.org>

[http://channelislands.noaa.gov/management/resource/ship\\_strikes.html](http://channelislands.noaa.gov/management/resource/ship_strikes.html)

[http://environmentaldefensecenter.org/learn/current\\_cases/save\\_the\\_whales/index.html](http://environmentaldefensecenter.org/learn/current_cases/save_the_whales/index.html)

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NOAA’s **Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary** was designated in 1980 to protect marine resources surrounding San Miguel, Santa Rosa, Santa Cruz, Anacapa and Santa Barbara islands. The sanctuary spans approximately 1,470 square miles, extending from island shorelines to six miles offshore, and encompasses a rich diversity of marine life, habitats and historical and cultural resources.

The **Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District** is a local government agency that works to protect the people and the environment of Santa Barbara County from the effects of air pollution.

The **Environmental Defense Center**, a non-profit law firm, protects and enhances the local environment through education, advocacy, and legal action and works primarily within Santa Barbara, Ventura, and San Luis Obispo counties. Since 1977, EDC has empowered community based organizations to advance environmental protection. Program areas include protecting coast and ocean resources, open spaces and wildlife, and human and environmental health. Learn more about EDC at [www.EnvironmentalDefenseCenter.org](http://www.EnvironmentalDefenseCenter.org).

The **National Marine Sanctuary Foundation** enhances national marine sanctuaries in their goal to protect essential U.S. marine areas and to ensure a healthy ocean. Through public-private partnerships, NMSF fosters scientific research, funds conservation projects, supports educational programs, and advocates for public policies on behalf of these special places representing the best hope for the ocean and Great Lakes. Learn more at [www.NMSFocean.org](http://www.NMSFocean.org).