



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Ten companies slowing ships in Santa Barbara Channel region 2016 program to protect blue whales and blue skies**

SANTA BARBARA, Calif. — The partners in an initiative to cut air pollution and protect whales announced today that 10 shipping companies are participating in the 2016 incentive program, voluntarily reducing speeds in the Santa Barbara Channel region to 12 knots or less. The program started July 1 and will continue until November 15, 2016.

Automatic Identification System (AIS) data for ship speeds for the July and August transits in the program verified that more than 75 percent of the enrolled transits were successful in reducing speeds to 12 knots or less, and four transits were successful in achieving an additional bonus incentive for slowing to 10 knots or less.

Ships emit greenhouse gases and air pollutants, and account for more than 50 percent of smog-forming nitrogen oxides (NOx) emissions in Santa Barbara County and for more than 25 percent of NOx emissions in Ventura County. Ship strikes are also a major threat to recovering endangered and threatened whale populations, including blue, humpback, and fin whales. Slowing ship speeds reduces air pollution and has been shown to reduce the risk of fatal strikes on whales.

The following shipping companies are participating in the 2016 vessel speed reduction incentive program: CMA CGM, Evergreen, Hamburg Sud, Hapag Lloyd, Holland, K Line, Maersk, MOL, NYK Line, and Yang Ming. The program is a collaborative effort by the Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District, NOAA's Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary, Ventura County Air Pollution Control District, National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, and Volgenau Foundation.

"It's exciting that we are able to build on the success of our 2014 VSR Trial to implement an expanded vessel speed reduction program in 2016," said Chris Mobley, superintendent of Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary. "We applaud the shipping industry's high degree of participation."

"The positive response we have received demonstrates that this program is not only successful in protecting whales and reducing air pollution but also highly supported by the industry," said Ted Lillestolen, NMSF interim President and CEO. "Now that we know this initiative works, we need to find additional resources to continue the effort."

The incentives for the 2016 program are designed to target historically faster transits to achieve the most significant air emission and whale conservation benefits from the reduced speeds. Incentives range from \$1,500 to \$2,500 depending on historical speeds in the program area. Additional incentives up to \$1,250 are available for ships that slow to 10 knots or less; submit detailed whale

sightings reports; and demonstrate that schedules were adjusted so that the ships did not need to speed up elsewhere along the route.

Response to this variable incentive scale has been positive, with most companies electing to opt in on these additional voluntary measures and some choosing to even go beyond what they're being asked to do. One example is K Line, whose captains and crew have regularly provided photos and annotated maps of all whale sightings along with the requested whale sightings report. In addition, more than 90 percent of the companies whose ships traverse the California coast indicated interest in participating in a Bay Area program in the future if one is offered.

Highlights of the 2016 expanded program as compared with the 2014 program include:

- The 2014 program incentivized 27 slow-speed transits through the region; the 2016 Program will more than double that number.
- Seven shipping lines participated in the 2014 trial program; 10 are participating in 2016.
- The 2016 program received applications for 367 transits; this represents 33 percent of the total transits through the Santa Barbara region during the program period. The 2014 program received 89 applications.

“Since the shipping industry is regulated by national and international organizations, the only way for us as a local agency to address shipping emissions in our region is through innovative strategies,” said Mike Villegas, director of the Ventura County Air Pollution Control District. “The level of participation is very encouraging and demonstrates a sustained program would have a significant impact on air quality.”

“The high demand to participate in the trial leads us to believe a full-scale program would be very successful,” said Aeron Arlin Genet, director of the Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District. “Industry has demonstrated the willingness to slow down to protect blue whales and blue skies, the only hurdle remaining is an annual incentive fund. We will continue to pursue partnerships and funding opportunities.”

For more information, visit <http://www.ourair.org/air-pollution-marine-shipping>.

For everyone who loves the ocean and wants to ensure its healthy future, America's National Marine Sanctuaries and the **National Marine Sanctuary Foundation**, working together, are delivering real solutions and measurable results. A private, non-profit organization, NMSF plays a vital role in the work of the coast-to-coast US sanctuary system through support of research and conservation, education, citizen science, outreach and community engagement. NMSF is also a respected advocate for ocean awareness and protection with policymakers nationally and worldwide. Learn more at: [marinesanctuary.org](http://marinesanctuary.org).

**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. Learn more at [www.channelislands.noaa.gov/](http://www.channelislands.noaa.gov/).

**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. Learn more at [www.OurAir.org](http://www.OurAir.org).

**The Ventura County Air Pollution Control District** is the local government agency in Ventura County that protects public health and agriculture from the adverse effects of air pollution by

identifying air pollution problems and developing a comprehensive program to achieve and maintain state and federal air quality standards. Learn more at [www.vcapcd.org](http://www.vcapcd.org).

The **Volgenau Foundation** protects our planet and serves our society by supporting programs that conserve natural resources, educate children, and promote classical music. For more information, see [www.volgenaufoundation.org](http://www.volgenaufoundation.org).