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**EPA defends sulphur limits**

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**Chris Grundler: Sulphur rules will prevent premature deaths**

The US **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** has been defending the tighter sulphur limits due to come force in Emission Control Areas (ECAs) from the start of next year.

Chris Grundler, director of the EPA's Office of Transportation and Air Quality and Office of Air and Radiation, claimed the rules could prevent between 12,000 and 31,000 premature deaths by 2030.

He was giving evidence this week before a US House of Representatives sub-committee that has been reviewing upcoming maritime legislation.

From January 2015, the North American ECA, in line with ECAs in Europe, will require ships to use a fuel with a maximum sulphur continent of 0.10%.

The only exception will be for ships that have installed emission abatement technology (scrubbers).

The sub-committee heard criticism of the ECA regulations with some industry players claiming the cost of low sulphur fuel would put an unfair burden on the shipping sector.

But Grundler said that even with the stricter sulphur limit, ships would still be allowed to use fuels with "a higher sulphur content than fuel for any other US transportation method."

One of the critics of the ECA regulations has been Rod Jones, president of **Canada Steamship Lines (CSL)**.

He told the subcommittee that ship operators were still unconvinced that scrubbers were a viable option.

[Writing in a commentary co-authored with Bill Terry, CEO of **Eagle Rock Aggregates**](http://www.bunkerworld.com/news/i128071/Shipping_heads_urge_change_to_North_American_ECA_boundary), he said a policy meant to improve coastal air quality would "actually achieve the opposite".

"The [ECA] policy sounds reasonable enough, but its impacts on one sector of the shipping industry, short sea shipping, will mean serious environmental and economic consequences all along our nation’s coastline."

They warned of  the "unintended consequences" of forcing ships to burn more expensive, low sulphur fuel. "Increased shipping costs means a decreased demand for short sea shipping, but it won’t reduce our need to transport the goods that short sea ships carry.

"Instead, they will be displaced onto trucks and trains, modes of transportation that actually use more fuel and emit more greenhouse gasses than short sea shipping."

**Nick Jameson,**[**London News Desk**](http://www.sustainableshipping.com/home/contact)**,** 5th March 2014 13:51 GMT