

Ballast water discharge has been cited as one of the primary sources for the spread of aquatic invasive species. As noted in House Report 112-266, San Francisco Bay is considered the most invaded aquatic ecosystem on earth. In order to bring more focus to ballast water treatment, Bay Planning Coalition (BPC) will host a Ballast Water Briefing. This briefing will facilitate dialogue between stakeholders in the maritime and water/wastewater industries on ballast water regulations, treatment capabilities, environmental and economic impacts within the Bay. Specific regulations to be discussed are: a) the 2006 California legislation mandating ballast water treatment standards for discharge in California waters; b) the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Draft 2013 National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Vessel General Permit (VGP); and c) Coast Guard (CG) mandates for vessels to install CG-approved ballast water management systems.

The California Code of Regulations, Article 4.7 – “Performance Standards for the Discharge of Ballast Water for Vessels Operating in California Waters,” sets an implementation timeline for discharged ballast water mandated in 2006 state legislation. The performance standards are for all vessels discharging ballast water in California waters. All discharged ballast water must meet treatment standards by 2016. The final phase of implementation will require discharged ballast water to meet zero detectable life forms by 2020. There are many options for complying with the discharge standards, including on-board treatment, third party treatment and not discharging ballast water.

The EPA currently requires a Vessel General Permit (VGP) (Clean Water Act Section 402) for all vessels that discharge ballast (with the exception of non commercial vessels and vessels under 79 feet). The current VGP expires on December 19, 2013 and the Draft 2013 NDES VGP was released in December 2011. EPA is proposing numeric ballast effluent limits equivalent to the U.S. Coast Guard Phase I proposed discharge standard, which is equivalent to the standard set by the International Ballast Water Convention. Treatment limits can be met in one of four ways: discharge treated ballast water meeting the applicable numeric limits; transfer ballast water to a third party (onshore or on another vessel); use of treated municipal/potable water as ballast water; or by not discharging ballast water.

The CG also revised federal ballast water regulations as of 2012. The compliance date for vessels to install CG-approved ballast water management systems is January 1, 2021. However, ships may petition to delay installation of ballast water management systems if there are issues in meeting the compliance timeframe.

BPC will convene two panels consisting of leading science and regulatory perspectives on this important topic. Panelists will include representatives from: the US EPA; California State Lands Commission; Matson Navigation; Port of San Francisco; Stanford Environmental Law; California Maritime Academy; State Water Resource Control Board. *The Science of Ballast Water Treatment Panel* will consist of leading experts with extensive experience in the science of ballast water treatment. Potential topics to be discussed are: the practicality, technological complexities, capabilities and future of ballast water treatment systems. *The Federal and State Ballast Water Regulations Panel* will convene a diverse group of federal and state agencies as well as navigation industry and legal representatives. This panel will discuss the regulations behind the new ballast water treatment standards as well as the potential impacts through phases of implementation.

The mission of BPC is to work through a broad coalition to enhance the quality of life in the San Francisco Bay Region. The goals and objectives of the BPC Ballast Water Briefing on June 7, 2012 from 8:00 – 11:30 am at the URS Downtown Oakland office are to facilitate productive and, hopefully, on-going dialogue with respect to ballast water treatment and reducing invasive species entering the San Francisco Bay.

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