



Expanded Clean-Air Program Off to Strong Start **Nearly two-thirds of ocean carriers target new Green Flag goals**

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Ocean carriers are in a hurry to slow down in the newly expanded "Green Flag" Vessel Speed Reduction Program at the Port of Long Beach. The program — new for 2009 — pushes the low-speed zone out to 40 nautical miles (nm) to increase the program's air quality benefits.

The new 40-nm Green Flag program saw 63 percent participation in January, the program's first month. Meanwhile, the existing 20-nm program is holding steady at 93 percent participation. The Port urges vessel operators to comply with the Green Flag program as soon as possible in order to reap the financial incentives and clean air benefits.

"I commend the ocean carriers for partnering with the Port of Long Beach in this important clean-air program. Green Flag has been a success and we hope to see vessel operators continue to embrace the opportunity to save fuel and to reduce shipping's impact on the environment," said Richard D. Steinke, Executive Director of the Port of Long Beach.

By slowing their vessels to 12 knots at least 90 percent of the time for one year, operators can qualify for lowered dockage rates the following year. If they achieve 100 percent compliance, vessel operators are presented with the Port's coveted Green Flag achievement award.

The original Green Flag program, which debuted in 2005, asked ships to slow down within 20 nm of San Pedro's Point Fermin. Participation in the program has climbed steadily from 60 percent in 2006 to 93 percent in 2008.

In 2007, the 20-nm Green Flag program eliminated an estimated 678 tons of nitrogen oxides, 453 tons of sulfur oxides and 60 tons of diesel particulate matter. In addition, the program reduced greenhouse gases by more than 24,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents. If all vessels participate at the 40-nm range, the amount of emissions reduced is projected to more than double. Vessels made nearly 5,000 trips into and out of the Port in 2008.

For complying with the 20-nm program, vessel operators receive a 15 percent reduction in dockage fees, known as the "Green Rate." For slowing down from 40 nm, the vessels receive the "Green-Plus Rate," which is 25 percent off.

The Marine Exchange of Southern California tracks cargo vessel speeds and sends the data to the Port of Long Beach.

Ocean carriers and vessel operators that need more information about the program should contact Ralph Delgado at the Port of Long Beach's Trade Division at rdelgado@polb.com.

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