



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

September 9, 2014

**Contacts:**

Mike Villegas, Ventura County Air Pollution Control District, 805-645-1440  
Kristi Birney, Environmental Defense Center, 805-963-1622  
Mary Byrd, Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District, 805-961-8833  
Sean Hastings, Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary, 805-729-5598  
Katie Zacharkiw, National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, 301 608-3040

## **More ships to slow down for cleaner air and whale protection: Ventura County Air Pollution Control District chips in for ship speed reduction incentive trial**

VENTURA, Calif. — The Ventura County Air Pollution Control District (VCAPCD) Board approved today the VCAPCD's participation in a coalition of four government, non-profit and marine industry groups in their trial incentive program underway in the Santa Barbara Channel since July 1<sup>st</sup>. The program will slow down cargo ships to reduce air pollution and increase the protection of endangered whales.

At its September 9, 2014 meeting, the VCAPCD Board approved \$30,000 in funding for the effort, increasing the program's total funding to \$90,000. Large marine cargo ships transiting the Santa Barbara Channel (approximately 2,500 per year), as well as those docking at Port Hueneme, are a significant source of air pollution in Santa Barbara and Ventura counties. Air emissions from ocean going vessels transiting the Santa Barbara Channel constitute approximately one quarter of the ozone-forming nitrogen oxide emissions in VCAPCD's jurisdiction. Channel ship traffic is also a significant source of other air pollutants such as sulfur dioxide, greenhouse gases, diesel particulate matter, and other toxic air pollutants.

Reducing the speed of these vessels from 14 knots or greater to less than 12 knots can significantly cut emissions of several air pollutants that blow onshore into Ventura and Santa Barbara counties, and will reduce the chances that a ship strike on a whale will kill the whale. According to Air Pollution Control Officer Mike Villegas, "By having these ships slow down in the Channel, we will be achieving significant emission reductions and helping to protect public health."

"We welcome the Ventura County Air Pollution Control District to the coalition," said Sean Hastings, Resource Protection Coordinator with the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary. "The ships and whales move and the benefits of slowing ships down can and should be shared with our neighboring counties."

Six global shipping companies, COSCO, Hapag-Lloyd, K Line, Maersk Line, Matson, and United Arab Shipping Company are participating in the program and have identified ships in their fleets that already have or will transit between Point Conception and the Ports of

Los Angeles and Long Beach, from July-October 31, 2014, at speeds of 12 knots or less (reduced from typical speeds of 14 – 18 knots). Participating companies will receive \$2,500 per verified transit through the Santa Barbara Channel.

The trial program, developed and implemented by the Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District, NOAA's Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary, and the Environmental Defense Center, is modeled after successful speed reduction incentive programs at the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles, where more than 90 percent of the shipping lines participate.

Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District Air Pollution Control Officer Dave Van Mullem remarked, "We are thrilled that the Ventura County air district is helping to fund the program. The increased funding will help reduce more emissions of smog-forming pollutants that harm our health, and will allow us to gather more data in our trial program." With the Ventura County air district's contribution, a total of 32 transits will be incentivized with the program's total current funding of \$90,000. Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District and the Santa Barbara Foundation are also contributing funding, and the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation will manage the incentive payments. 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.

"The expansion of the program will provide more data for the development of science-based solutions to both the air quality and whale protection issues," said TL Garrett, vice president, Pacific Merchant Shipping Association. "Our members are pleased to participate in this voluntary program to advance the science."

Maersk Line representative Dr. Lee Kindberg, director, Environment & Sustainability, North America, added, "This is exciting news. More transits during the trial period will give us more data, and a better handle on creating a successful program."

Kristi Birney of the Environmental Defense Center said, "This program offers real benefits on climate issues, endangered species protection, and human health for our entire region. It is wonderful to have both Ventura and Santa Barbara County air districts doing so much for this partnership to slow ships down in the Santa Barbara Channel, improving the air we breathe and protecting the whales we all enjoy spotting off our coast."

### **Community Forum in Santa Barbara**

On **Wednesday, September 10**, there will be a community forum, ***Protecting Blue Whales and Blue Skies*** held in Santa Barbara. The forum, sponsored by the coalition and the University of California at Santa Barbara's Bren School of Environmental Science and Management, is free and open to the public and will discuss this unique environmental partnership. It will be held at the **Cabrillo Pavilion Arts Center** at **1118 E. Cabrillo Boulevard, Santa Barbara**, from **3 – 5pm**. For more information visit **OurAir.org** or call **805/961-8833**.

For additional information 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)

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).

**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 **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.

-End-