



Mr Kitack Lim
Secretary General
International Maritime Organization

18th June 2019

Dear Secretary General,

I am sure that you will have seen and been shocked by the weekend's media coverage of the accelerating changes to our climate and the multiple crises emerging in the Arctic region

In a matter of days, we have seen reports of [Arctic permafrost going through a rapid meltdown - 70 years early](#) and [Arctic sea ice melt has gone into overdrive](#), as the [Greenland ice sheet lost 2 billion tonnes of ice in the last week](#). Meanwhile, James Anderson, a Harvard University professor of atmospheric chemistry [said that we have just five years to enact a "World War II-style transformation of industry."](#)

If we are to respond in an effective manner to the changing climate, and in particular the impacts on the Arctic, it is essential that everyone including the shipping community becomes more focussed and determined to take responsibility. Some immediate first steps to slow down the rate at which these changes are occurring are essential. For international shipping, there are some actions that can be taken immediately:

- ban the use of HFO and carriage of HFO fuel in the Arctic,
- reduce black carbon emissions by switching to cleaner fuels, and
- reduce ship speed to cut CO2 emissions.

None of these measures require infrastructure costs, only changes in current practice.

While it is the role and responsibility of the International Maritime Organization's Member States to agree on policy and regulation appropriate for international shipping, we currently have a six-month break in discussions and negotiations in relation to addressing greenhouse gas emissions, and even longer in addressing black carbon emissions and a potential ban on HFO use and carriage as fuel in the Arctic.

As a result, I feel that direction and a strong message from the Secretary General would be very helpful at this time. With this in mind, I would respectfully ask if you would consider reminding the IMO Members that they can support immediate measures to reduce shipping's contribution to the current climate crisis by:

- supporting the International Code on Shipping Operations in Polar Waters (Polar Code) recommendation that IMO Members should apply the same requirements with respect to HFO while operating in Arctic waters as are applicable in the Antarctic, that is a prohibition on the use and carriage of HFO, and
- switching to lighter, cleaner fuels to reduce the impact of black carbon emissions in the Arctic which was first recognised as necessary over a decade ago.

These must only be the very first steps. Much more will be needed to reverse the changes already happening as part of the climate crisis. The need for making significant progress at the GHG Intersessional in November has never been higher, and the opportunity presented by PPR 7 in February 2020, which will consider action on two agenda items focused on reducing the impacts on international shipping on the Arctic - an IMO Arctic Summit maybe - will be equally important.

While I recognise that a statement from the Secretary General might be unprecedented, I believe that what we are seeing happening around the planet is unprecedented, and that strong leadership is necessary to ensure that we all take responsibility and do everything that we can.

Yours sincerely



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