

Open letter to the IMO Secretary-General for communication to all IMO Member States, Intergovernmental and Non-Governmental Organisations, copied to the UNFCCC, UNEP and EU

Last ditch battle at the IMO to save the summer sea ice!

Mr Kitak Lim, Secretary-General
International Maritime Organization

Thursday 25th March, 2021

Dear Secretary-General,

Black carbon is a potent short-lived climate-forcer that when deposited directly on ice and snow - for example by ships accessing the increasingly ice-free Arctic - has a warming impact that is magnified up to 10 times.

Black carbon emissions from shipping in the Arctic have risen 85% between 2015 - 2019, a trend which is completely incompatible with the 25 - 33% black carbon reduction goal of the Arctic Council, which the IMO recently joined as an Observer.

At current rates of carbon emissions, Arctic sea ice may disappear some summers by 2035, exacerbating other climate impacts such as permafrost thaw and sea-level rise from the Greenland ice sheet. Black carbon emissions from shipping are speeding this loss, and climate heating in the Arctic has an impact around the world.

This Friday, the IMO's Pollution, Prevention and Response subcommittee meets to decide on measures to address international shipping's climate impact on the Arctic. Work on these measures was kicked off exactly 11 years ago this week.

Now is the moment for **decisive action** by the IMO to ensure that black carbon emissions from shipping do not contribute any further to an Arctic meltdown. Now is NOT the moment for "goal-based" measures, guidelines or voluntary action.

On Friday the IMO must agree to move to implement mandatory measures that will result in rapid reductions in black carbon emissions from international shipping. That first move should require all ships operating in and near the Arctic to switch immediately to cleaner fuels. Distillates are the obvious candidate as this transition can be realised literally overnight. Applying such a move to all ships in the Arctic now operating on HFOs or VLSFOs would see an immediate reduction in black carbon emissions from Arctic shipping of 44%.

Subsequent work will also be necessary to address the issue of aromatics and to co-develop an engine standard and measurement protocol, but these will only result in emissions reductions in the longer-term and are not a substitute for an immediate switch to distillates for ships in the Arctic.

The Clean Arctic Alliance is campaigning to ban heavy fuel oil (HFO) and eliminate black carbon emissions from Arctic shipping
www.HFOfreearctic.org

Mr Secretary General, in this year of the UNFCCC COP26, and amid heightened global concern about the climate crisis and the loss of Arctic sea ice, the world is watching IMO and its Member States and expecting a response proportionate to the Arctic climate emergency.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sian Prior". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Dr Sian Prior
Lead Advisor,
Clean Arctic Alliance