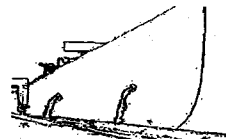




FACT SHEET



Environmental Protection Agency Aquatic Nuisance Species in Ballast Water Discharges

On January 13, 1999, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) received a petition asking that EPA revise a regulatory exemption that currently provides that ballast water discharges from vessels do not need permits under EPA's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program. In response to this petition and the growing national concern about aquatic nuisance species (ANS) introductions, the Assistant Administrator directed Office of Water staff to study the issue of aquatic nuisance species in ballast water discharges, investigating what mechanisms are available under the Clean Water Act or other relevant statutes or programs to effectively control the introduction of aquatic nuisance species by ballast water discharges. He requested that a report be drafted on the findings of this study, and that it be made available for public comment before it was finalized.

EPA is releasing that draft report, *Aquatic Nuisance Species in Ballast Water Discharges: Issues and Options*, for public comment, and will finalize the report once public comments have been considered.

The draft report finds that the greatest impediment to effectively controlling ANS introductions from ballast water discharges is the current lack of commercially available technical solutions, and that scientific and regulatory developments are expected to provide significant new tools for fighting ANS. The report suggests that EPA can best combat ANS introductions from ballast water discharges by taking a leadership role in those developments. Recommended EPA actions in the draft report include:

- Actively promote research and development of ballast water treatment technologies
- Work with the U.S. Coast Guard to maximize compliance with ballast water regulations under the National Invasive Species Act (NISA)
- Support the U.S. Coast Guard's efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of the NISA's regulations and to revise them if necessary to enhance their effectiveness
- Intensify outreach activities to educate shippers, ports and the public on the serious economic and ecological impacts of nuisance species

An electronic copy of the entire draft report can be viewed or downloaded from EPA's Internet web site at www.epa.gov/owow/invasive_species/petition.html. A paper copy of the draft report can be obtained by sending a written request to: Marine Pollution Control Branch, ATTN: Ballast Water, US Environmental Protection Agency (4504F), 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC, 20460.

If you have information or comments to provide, please email them to Ballast.Water@epa.gov, or mail them to: Marine Pollution Control Branch, ATTN: Ballast Water, US Environmental Protection Agency (4504F), 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC, 20460. Please include your name, affiliation, address, phone number and/or email address. All comments received before September 30, 2001, will be made part of the official record, and will be considered when finalizing the report.