



## Protecting Blue Whales and Blue Skies is a partnership for cleaner air, safer whales, and quieter oceans

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Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District	Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary	Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary
Ventura County Air Pollution Control District	Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary	National Marine Sanctuary Foundation
Bay Area Air Quality Management District	Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary	Volgenau Foundation

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## **Eleven global shipping companies slowed transits in 2017 program to protect blue whales and blue skies**

**Program cuts more than 80 tons of smog-forming emissions**

SANTA BARBARA, Calif. — The partners in an initiative to cut air pollution and protect whales today announced results from the 2017 program and publicly recognized the 11 shipping companies who participated, reducing speeds to 12 knots or less in two regions. For the first time the program included speed reduction zones in the San Francisco Bay Area in addition to the Santa Barbara Channel region. The voluntary incentive program started July 1 and ended November 15, 2017. The recognition ceremony, hosted by the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, is taking place today at the Bannings Landing Community Center near the Port of Los Angeles and Port of Long Beach.

Automatic Identification System (AIS) data for ship speeds in the program verified that more than 140 transits were successful in reducing speeds to 12 knots or less, and more than half of these were successful in achieving a bonus incentive for slowing to 10 knots or less. The program reduced 83.5 tons of emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx), a smog-forming air pollutant, and 2,630 metric tons of greenhouse gases.

In addition, 75 percent of the transits that traveled between the two slow-speed regions did not speed up along the coast in between (where no incentive was offered), as compared with previous 2016-2017 baseline speeds for that area; 60 percent traveled slower than their previous baseline speeds.

Ships account for more than 50 percent of NOx emissions in Santa Barbara County, more than 25 percent of NOx emissions in Ventura County, and more than 17 percent of NOx emissions in the eight-county region represented by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District. Ship strikes are also a major threat to recovering endangered and threatened whale populations, including blue, humpback, and fin whales. Slowing ship speeds reduces air pollution and ocean noise, and has been shown to reduce the risk of fatal strikes on whales.

The following shipping companies participated in the 2017 vessel speed reduction (VSR) incentive program: CMA CGM; Evergreen; Hamburg Sud, Hapag Lloyd, Hyundai, K Line, Maersk, Matson, MSC (Mediterranean Shipping Company); NYK (Nippon Yusen Kaisha) Ro-Ro Division, and Yang Ming. The program is a collaborative effort by all the agencies and organizations listed above.

"The expansion of the vessel speed reduction program in 2017 demonstrates that ocean commerce and ocean conservation can work together when the shipping industry, NGOs, and government are in partnership," said Chris Mobley, Superintendent, NOAA's Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary.

"Our national marine sanctuaries provide opportunities to build innovative partnerships for on-the-water conservation that protect rare species and the places they call home," said Kris Sarri, President and CEO of the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation. "The voluntary vessel speed reduction program is one example of how we can create a win-win for conservation and the health of coastal communities by engaging shipping companies in reducing whale mortality from ship strikes and improving air quality for children while maintaining commerce."

Incentives ranged from \$1,000 to \$ 2,500; a bonus of \$250 was provided if the ship slowed to 10 knots or less, which is considered more protective for whales. For the first time, data were analyzed for the area along the California coast between the two speed reduction regions.

Highlights of the 2017 program as compared with the 2016 program included the following:

- The 2017 program was a partnership of three air districts and four national marine sanctuaries along the California coast, while the 2016 program was a partnership of two air districts and one sanctuary;
- The 2017 Program provided financial incentives for 143 slow speed transits, nearly three times number of transits incentivized in 2016 (50 transits);
- The 2017 program more than tripled the emission reductions as compared with the 2016 program.

Mike Villegas, Air Pollution Control Officer of the Ventura County Air Pollution Control District said, "Participation by these shipping lines demonstrates a voluntary incentive program can significantly reduce emissions in a cost-effective manner. Further, these reductions in nitrogen oxides are a significant step towards attaining the state and federal air quality standards for ground-level ozone in Ventura County. The continued implementation of the voluntary vessel speed reduction program is a high priority for our agency."

"We are proud to be partnered with all the organizations in the Blue Whales and Blue Skies vessel speed reduction program," said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Bay Area Air District. "This cooperative, multi-agency, coastal effort highlights the impact we can have when we come together with our differing goals, but find a mutually beneficial solution."

"This program continues to improve, with more agency and industry partners working together toward shared goals," said Aeron Arlin Genet, Director of Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District. "Most notably in 2017, we successfully expanded the program to two speed reduction zones and secured pollution reductions along the California coast in the Santa Barbara Channel and Bay Area regions. We look forward to what a program for the entire California coast could achieve."

The partners are identifying funding sources and working on developing a 2018 VSR incentive program. For more information, visit <http://www.ourair.org/air-pollution-marine-shipping>.

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