

# MARINE VESSEL SPEED REDUCTION

Targeted Advocacy
State

## SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE

As the County identified in its 2013 Legislative Platform, large ships traveling off the coast produce significant air emissions that impact public health and make it difficult to attain air quality standards. While the County does not have a port, the location of internationally-designated shipping lanes in the Santa Barbara Channel means that ships are traveling along an approximately 100 mile stretch of water just off the County's coast. According to the Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District (District), shipping represents the largest source of nitrogen oxides (NOx) emissions in the County. NOx is an ozone-forming pollutant, and achieving reductions of NOx emissions is critical to the County's efforts to attain the state ozone standard and maintain attainment of the federal ozone standard. State, national, and international rules currently in effect will reduce emissions of other pollutants in the near-term, but will only achieve NOx reductions in a long-term timeframe. Similarly, without further action, greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions will also only be achieved in a long-term timeframe.

As the County also identified in its 2013 Platform, reducing ship speeds in the Channel is a particularly promising strategy for addressing the problem. Reducing speeds down to 12 knots or less could significantly reduce emissions of a range of pollutants including GHG and NOx in the near term, and would also reduce the likelihood that a ship strike on a whale would be lethal.

The District and several agencies and organizations are proposing development and implementation of a Marine Vessel Speed Reduction Incentive Initiative through the Santa Barbara Channel and eventually along the California coast. The initiative would be modeled after the successful speed reduction incentive program in place at the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach. One way to fund this initiative could be through California's Cap-and-Trade auction proceeds, as the reduction in GHG emissions aligns with the objectives of AB1532: *Greenhouse Gas Reduction Account*. AB1532 authorizes the legislature to develop a three-year investment plan to use auction proceeds to reduce GHG emissions in California.

## PUBLIC BENEFIT/IMPACT

A Marine Vessel Speed Reduction Incentive initiative would cut emissions of NOx and other pollutants by up to 50 percent, providing significant public health benefits. GHG reductions would provide climate-protection benefits, and ship speed reduction would also help protect endangered whale species in the Santa Barbara Channel and along the California coast. Economic benefits would result from reducing the burden on local industry to implement pollutant-reduction measures.

## COST TO GOVERNMENT

No direct costs to local county government are anticipated, other than costs related to funding the requested advocacy efforts. If allocated, state funds would be used to implement the incentive program. There may be future costs to local agencies, such as the District or other partner agencies, related to implementing a study, pilot project, or eventually a statewide program.

## REQUESTED ACTION AND STRATEGY

Specific, timely advocacy by Santa Barbara County would be of great help in the effort to influence the AB 1532 Investment Plan to include the speed reduction initiative. A draft investment plan is scheduled for release in early April, and a public hearing is scheduled for April 25-26 at the California Air Resources Board. The Department of Finance will submit the final plan to the legislature in May of 2013. In the event the efforts associated with the GHG investment plan are unsuccessful, the District and partners request ongoing advocacy and legislative support from the County in identifying and securing an alternate funding and implementation path.

## CONTACTS

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