



Press Release

Inuit Support Ban of Heavy Fuel Oil (HFO) Proposed at International Maritime Organization's Marine Environment Protection Committee Meeting in London, UK

October 29, 2018 – Ottawa, Canada – Inuit worked with 14 other nations towards the development of a ban on the use of Heavy Fuel Oil (HFO) in the Arctic, which is currently banned in the Antarctic. The discussion toward its eventual ban was held at the International Maritime Organization's Environment Protection Committee Meeting (MEPC 73) in London on October 25, 2018.

The 14 nations - Austria, Bangladesh, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Poland, and the UK – supported a move to have an IMO technical subcommittee begin work on ways to curb impacts of using HFOs in Arctic Waters, including an eventual ban.

ICC (Canada) Vice-President Lisa Koperqualuk represented Inuit at the London meeting. She said, "This is a strong first step towards a ban of HFO's in the Arctic. We want to ensure that our communities are not negatively impacted and do not end up paying for changes that occur because of the ban of HFO's, due to the high cost of living already experienced by the Arctic communities. Most goods are shipped to Arctic communities during annual sealift resupply in the summer months." Heavy Fuel, also known as Bunker fuel, is the cheapest maritime shipping fuel.

ICC adopted the Utqiagvik Declaration at the 13th ICC General Assembly in Utqiagvik, Alaska in July 2018. The Declaration calls for the complete phasing out of HFO's in the Arctic in clause 18, which reads:

"Direct ICC to advocate for the enforcement of the International Marine Organization Polar Code, other international and national regulations, advance emergency response, and phase out heavy fuel oil (HFO) in order to minimize impacts on marine mammals and fish and to prevent disruption of seasonal hunting, and for safety and environmental protection."

It is hoped the work conducted by the IMO subcommittee will lead to a ban that can eventually be adopted in 2021, and phased in by 2023.

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