

MARINE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION  
COMMITTEE  
70th session  
Agenda item 17

MEPC 70/17/11  
2 September 2016  
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## ANY OTHER BUSINESS

### Comments on document MEPC 70/17/4 – Heavy fuel oil use by vessels in Arctic waters

#### Submitted by Canada and the United States

#### SUMMARY

<i>Executive summary:</i>	This document provides comments on document MEPC 70/17/4, and presents the intentions of the United States and Canada to explore various aspects associated with the use and carriage for use of heavy fuel oil by ships in the Arctic
<i>Strategic direction:</i>	7.1, 7.3
<i>High-level action:</i>	7.1.2, 7.3.1
<i>Output:</i>	No related provisions
<i>Action to be taken:</i>	Paragraph 9
<i>Related documents:</i>	MEPC 69/20/1; MEPC 70/17/4 and MEPC 70/17/9

#### Background

1 This document comments on document MEPC 70/17/4, and is submitted in accordance with paragraph 6.12.5 of the *Guidelines on the organization and method of work of the Maritime Safety Committee and the Marine Environment Protection Committee and their subsidiary bodies* (MSC-MEPC.1/Circ.4/Rev.4).

2 The United States and Canada thank the submitters for their document MEPC 70/17/4, which, along with their earlier submittal at MEPC 69 (MEPC 69/20/1), sets out environmental concerns associated with the use and carriage for use of heavy fuel oil (HFO) by ships in the Arctic. Both of those documents discuss the risk of damage to the environment posed by spills of HFO, among other concerns. As suggested in both documents, an HFO spill in the Arctic could cause long-term damage to the environment.

3 As announced by the U.S.-Canada Joint Statement on Climate, Energy, and Arctic Leadership issued on 10 March 2016 by President Obama and Prime Minister Trudeau, the United States and Canada expressed their commitment to work with Arctic partners on "how best to address the risks posed by heavy fuel oil use and black carbon emissions from Arctic shipping."

4 The United States and Canada are active participants in the Arctic Council. The Arctic Council Working Group on the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME), and Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response Working Group (EPPR), have studied the issues surrounding HFO in Arctic waters, and will continue to do so during the upcoming meeting of PAME from 18 to 21 September 2016.

### **Going forward**

5 Development of measures to reduce the risk to Arctic waters from potential effects of the use and carriage for use of HFO by ships in the Arctic is complicated. Many aspects must be considered when weighing available mitigation options, including the development, sustainment and economics of communities that would be directly affected by such measures, particularly remote indigenous populations and business interests vital to remote population centres. Additionally, the viability of these measures depends inherently on the ability of States to enforce them.

6 The United States and Canada note the recent comments of the Russian Federation in their document MEPC 70/17/9 and acknowledge their proposals of a number of prevention and mitigation measures. These illustrate some examples of practical opportunities to further reduce the risks posed by the use and carriage for use of HFO by ships in the Arctic.

7 The United States and Canada have been and will continue to work intersessionally with a variety of stakeholders to identify options available to address the risks of use and carriage for use of HFO by ships, and any issues or concerns associated with those options. We have already begun such discussions with a group of NGOs, international and domestic maritime industries, as well as local and indigenous communities. Our goal through this intersessional work is to identify the issues and possible options to address the effects of use and carriage for use of HFO by ships in the Arctic with the intention of bringing them forward for consideration and discussion at a future session of the Committee.

8 The United States and Canada look forward to collaborating with other interested Member States and observers through IMO on how best to identify and address risks of use and carriage for use of HFO by ships in the Arctic. The United States and Canada urge all interested Member States to consider this important issue for the purpose of contributing to future discussions of additional measures to protect the Arctic environment.

### **Action requested of the Committee**

9 The Committee is invited to note the information in this document.

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