

The Washington Post

AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

Setting Standards for Ballast Water

The Dec. 13 news story on the Bush administration's plans to protect the Great Lakes mentioned the impact of aquatic invasive species. Species can be introduced in many ways, including discharges of ballast water from the commercial vessels that handle 99 percent of all U.S. overseas cargo.

While some have criticized the administration's financial commitment to the Great Lakes plan, the American Association of Port Authorities is more concerned that the federal government continues to focus on nuisance species as a regional challenge when the issue is international.

Widely varying regional, state and local requirements for the operation of vessels involved in trade create a legal patchwork. Only a strong national ballast water management program will help stop the release of nuisance species by commercial vessels.

Our association is a member of the Shipping Industry Ballast Water Coalition, which represents ocean carriers, U.S. ports and maritime labor. The coalition has urged the Coast Guard to set U.S. standards for ballast water treatment consistent with those of the International Maritime Organization. The United States needs to adopt these standards to protect our waters.

KURT NAGLE
President and Chief Executive
American Association of Port Authorities
Alexandria

Tom Toles
is away.



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