

## INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION (IMO) RATIFIES BALLAST WATER CONVENTION ON SEPTEMBER 8<sup>TH</sup>, ENACTING NEW ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATIONS FOR THE SHIPPING INDUSTRY

Carlsbad, California, September 9th, 2016 – The International Maritime Organization (IMO) announced Finland had acceded the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments (BWM Convention) and the landmark environmental regulations will enter into force on September 8, 2017. The accession brings the combined tonnage of contracting States to the treaty to 35.1441%, with 52 contracting Parties. The convention stipulates that it will enter into force 12 months after ratification by a minimum of 30 States, representing 35% of world merchant shipping tonnage.

The long delayed regulation (the BWM Convention) was adopted in 2004 by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the United Nations specialized agency with responsibility for developing global standards for ship safety and security and for the protection of the marine environment and the atmosphere from any harmful impacts of shipping.

“This is a truly significant milestone for the health of our planet,” said IMO Secretary-General Kitack Lim.

Under the Convention, all ships in international traffic are required to manage their ballast water and sediments to a certain standard, according to a ship-specific ballast water management plan. All ships will also have to carry a ballast water record book and an international ballast water management certificate.

With respect to ship ballast water testing, the water management standards are now in a period of active operational review, and ports will be required to publish their compliance, monitoring, and enforcement plans. As an intermediate solution, ships will continue to exchange ballast water mid-ocean. However, eventually most ships will need to install an on-board ballast water treatment system.

This announcement by the IMO puts the industry on a timeline that most observers feel is going to be challenging, since a minority of the global fleet has not had to conform to ballasting documentation and inspections (which have been in place under similar, but different regulations in the US, called the US Coast Guard Final Rule 2012).

Assure Controls provides products and services for the ballast water compliance management application. Under development and in limited release since 2015, “The Ballast Water Channel” ([www.TheBallastWaterChannel.com](http://www.TheBallastWaterChannel.com)) is an innovative



Her Excellency Mrs. Päivi Luostarinen Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of Finland to IMO, handed over the country's instrument of acceptance to the Ballast Water Management Convention to IMO Secretary-General Lim on Thursday (8 September 2016).



Ballast Water Compliance Support System (BW-CSS) which is customized for mariners, port state control authorities, and ships. A release plan is being finalized and will be available on the company's website. The QwikLite rapid toxicity assessment instrument and test kits will be sold through the company's distribution partners now established in the UK and in France (Mediterranean) territories.

The IMO regulations stem from the fact that ballast water may be taken onboard by ships for stability and can contain thousands of aquatic or marine microbes, plants and animals, which are then carried across the globe. Untreated ballast water released at the ship's destination could potentially introduce a new invasive marine species. Hundreds of such invasions have already taken place, sometimes with devastating consequences for the local ecosystem.

The International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments ([BWM Convention](#)) was adopted in 2004 to introduce global regulations to control the transfer of potentially invasive species. Once the treaty enters into force, ballast water will need to be treated before it is released into a new location, so that any microorganisms or small marine species are killed off.

"This Convention has been difficult to get ratified because of many technical or regulatory issues. This ratification means that going forward, ballasting operations are a regulated and documented activity, where mariners are accountable and ports are conducting inspections," noted Bryan Bjorndal, President and CEO of Assure Controls. "The major point is that each ship must put in place compliant plans, or their vessel doesn't get papers to ply their trade. Also, each country must put in appropriate ballast water port inspection processes. Our goal is to provide solutions at the lowest cost possible so that all parties can meet the requirements for this Convention."

More information International Maritime Organization (IMO) BW Convention:  
<http://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/PressBriefings/Pages/22-BWM-.aspx>

More information on Assure Controls:  
[www.assurecontrols.com](http://www.assurecontrols.com)

More information about The Ballast Water Channel:  
[www.TheBallastWaterChannel.com](http://www.TheBallastWaterChannel.com)