



University of Maryland
CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE

PRESS RELEASE

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Unique Barge Enters Research Fleet to Test Ballast Water Treatment Technologies

Baltimore, Md. (September 27, 2011) – A unique 155' barge, or Mobile Test Platform, was dedicated into the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science research fleet. This unique barge will be used to test ballast water treatment technologies that would be employed to reduce the risk of introducing invasive species through the maritime shipping industry. The dedication ceremony was led by Congressman Cummings (Maryland's 7th District) and included leadership from the US Maritime Administration, Maryland Port Authority, and UMCES.

The barge is part of UMCES' Maritime Environmental Research Center, established in partnership with the Maryland Port Administration, with additional support from the US Maritime Administration, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and American Bureau of Shipping, to provide test facilities, expertise, information, and decision tools to address key environmental issues facing the international maritime industry. The Center has the expertise, facilities, academic independence, and scientific integrity that will allow for testing and assessment of additional technologies and innovations related to Green Shipping, including hull fouling invasive species, port and vessel air emissions and alternative fuels, and gray and oily water treatments.

"The maritime industry recognizes the threat ballast water poses to introducing invasive species into ports and wants to employ the best technologies," said Dr. Mario Tamburri, at UMCES' Chesapeake Biological Laboratory and MERC Director. "The uniqueness of this test facility is that it can be moved from port to port within the Chesapeake Bay to evaluate the technologies in varying environmental conditions, such as salinity, temperature and biological community."

"MERC's collaborative research program between UMCES and federal and state agencies can serve as model to test proof-of-concept technologies to reduce the environmental impact from the maritime industry," said Dr. Donald Boesch, president of UMCES. "Independent testing of new technologies to ensure they meet specifications is a win-win both for the industry and the environment."

"There are already more than 150 invasive species now living in the Chesapeake Bay that originated in other ports," said Congressman Cummings. "This new testing platform will serve to evaluate emerging treatment technologies, before they are installed on ships, to ensure they meet the necessary standards and U.S. Coast Guard requirements, so that we can reduce this threat to our waterways."

The location of MERC on the Chesapeake Bay offers a unique opportunity to evaluate the performance of ballast water treatment systems under a variety of challenging environmental conditions. Utilizing a barge that can be moved from port to port, MERC

now has the capability to test systems in different seasons to capture temperature effects on system performance and in different locations within the Bay to capture impacts of varying salinities as required by both International and U.S. guidelines and standards. The Chesapeake also offers waters with naturally abundant, well-studied planktonic organisms that will allow for the appropriate quantification of effectiveness.

The University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science is the University System of Maryland's environmental research institution. UMCES researchers are helping improve our scientific understanding of Maryland, the region and the world through five research centers – Chesapeake Biological Laboratory in Solomons, Appalachian Laboratory in Frostburg, Horn Point Laboratory in Cambridge, Institute of Marine and Environmental Technology in Baltimore, and the Maryland Sea Grant College in College Park.

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