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The International Journal of Marine and Coastal Law (ESTU) addresses all aspects of marine and coastal law.

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ISSN: 0927-3522
E-ISSN: 1571-8085

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- Volume 31 (2016)
  - Issue 4
  - Issue 3
  - Issue 2
  - Issue 1
- Volume 30 (2015)
- Volume 29 (2014)
- Volume 28 (2013)
- Volume 27 (2012)
- Volume 26 (2011)
- Volume 25 (2010)
- Volume 24 (2009)
- Volume 23 (2008)
- Volume 22 (2007)
- Volume 21 (2006)
- Volume 20 (2005)
- Volume 19 (2004)
- Volume 17 (2002)
- Volume 16 (2001)
- Volume 14 (1999)
- Volume 13 (1998)
- Volume 12 (1997)
- Volume 11 (1996)
- Volume 10 (1995)
- Volume 9 (1994)

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Protecting the Malacca and Singapore Straits from Ships' Atmospheric Emissions through the Implementation of MARPOL Annex VI

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Abstract

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) adopted legally binding regulations for the control of ships' atmospheric emissions under Annex VI of the International Convention for the Prevention of Marine Pollution from Ships, 1973/78. With Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia being States Parties thereto, consequently, one of the effects in the Malacca and Singapore Straits is that it enables the Straits States, together with the IMO, to designate emission control areas for the approximately 75,000 ships transiting annually. This article examines the robust provisions of Annex VI for the marine environmental protection of the Straits and the contentious debates preceding an otherwise deadlocked technology-transfer resolution for implementing Annex VI. If implemented, Annex VI provisions will represent a unique milestone in the protection of the marine environment of the Straits which is regulated by the restrictive provisions of Part III of the 1988 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

∗ Corresponding author, e-mail: manyg@um.edu.my. Acknowledgment: This study was carried out under University of Malaya Research Project No. RP 60R-1506. Mary George thanks the staff of the University of Malaya; the Ministry of Transport, Malaysia; the Library of the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, London; the Wolf International and Comparative Law Library of the Georgetown University Law Center; and Captain Simon Bennet of Swire for all support in this research.
Keywords

Straits of Malacca and Singapore – Law of the Sea Convention – MARPOL Annex VI – sustainable global shipping – technical resolution debates

Introduction

Atmospheric shipping emissions\(^1\) are regulated by the International Maritime Organization (IMO)\(^2\) through Annex VI of the International Convention for the Prevention of Marine Pollution from Ships 1973, as amended by the Protocol of 1978 (MARPOL 73/78).\(^2\) To address global and local air pollution from ships, the IMO adopted MARPOL Annex VI by the “1997 Protocol”. This Protocol sets out specific detailed technical regulations\(^4\) which are frequently\(^5\) improved

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