MEDIA BRIEF: ADOPT THE IMO NET-ZERO FRAMEWORK. NO MORE DELAY.

The world's first proposed global price on shipping emissions has survived a year of pressure. On December 4th in London, governments must finish the job.

Recent worldwide elections in major democracies, from Brazil to Serbia to the United States have reinforced public demand for accountability, energy security and climate action. Against that backdrop, member states are set to meet in London from November 23rd - December 4th with a critical opportunity to adopt the U.N.'s International Maritime Organization's (IMO) Net-Zero Framework (NZF), a global fuel standard and emissions price for international shipping.

The draft framework was approved by formal vote at the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) in April 2025, with 63 countries in favor and 16 against. In October 2025, member states voted 57 to 49 to adjourn for a year, after a Saudi-led motion and amid reported pressure from the United States. The IMO's upcoming meetings will now decide whether the framework is adopted intact, amended or weakened. Several technical questions remain open, including how the economic mechanism works, how revenues are managed and how fuel emissions are measured.

As world leaders gather at COP31 without an official U.S. delegation, and the Iran war shows how exposed the world remains to oil and gas shocks, the IMO faces a decision that could strengthen both climate action and energy security for a critical global industry. Over the next two weeks, governments must choose. They can adopt a rule that steers a global industry toward clean fuels, or they can let a small group of oil-producing states trade it for voluntary schemes that will not deliver.

Our Ask: Adopt the Net-Zero Framework on December 4, intact

A mandatory fuel standard paired with a pricing mechanism that can close the price gap between zero emission fuels and fossil fuels as well as provide targeted support for vulnerable and trade dependent countries to participate in the clean shipping economy.

Why these meetings matter

- **Emissions are steadily rising**, and new ships are locking into fuel choices. Shipping accounts for about 3% of global greenhouse gas emissions and, without added policy, ICCT projects growth of about 50% by 2050.
- **Every year of delay locks in more pollution.** A cargo ship can stay in service for about 30 years, so vessels ordered now will sail into the 2050s.
- **Governments have already made a promise.** In 2023, IMO members committed to net-zero shipping emissions by or around 2050. The Net-Zero Framework is the proposed binding global framework on the table that can help deliver it.
- **The stakes reach beyond climate.** Fuel rules also shape port air quality, energy security and economic opportunity, ocean health and exposure to fuel price swings. Communities bear the price of inaction. Air pollution from shipping is associated with approximately 265,000 premature deaths worldwide each year.

Who backs the framework

A clear majority of IMO member states support the framework, including Australia, South Africa, Pacific Islands, United Kingdom, the European Union, Canada, Kenya and many others. Industry, aside from a vocal subset aligned with fossil fuel producers, has

consistently called for passage of the NZF from the IMO to provide needed investment certainty and a clear path forward. For example, the Global Maritime Forum reported this month that shipowners in its Getting to Zero Coalition said compliance needs a real penalty and that the weaker alternatives would add risks and burdens without solving substantive problems.

What to watch

Week one: ISWG-GHG 23 (November 23 to 27), the technical talks on framework details

- Whether delegates close the open questions on the economic mechanism, revenue management and the level of emissions reductions.
- Whether the IMO confirms a path forward on the lifecycle assessment guidelines, particularly sustainable fuel certification, with future sessions likely to address indirect land-use change (ILUC) risk, and methane emissions from LNG shipping.

Week two: MEPC 85 (November 30 to December 3), the regular committee session

- Watch whether the framework's fuel standard and incentives stay intact, or are reshaped by alternative proposals
- Whether the United States and Saudi Arabia, which oppose anything that resembles a "tax" on emissions, can move the committee.
- Whether delegates choose to resume the Extraordinary Session scheduled for Friday Dec 4th, to agree on new GHG rules.

Friday, December 4: Resumed Extraordinary Session (ES), the scheduled adoption decision

- Watch whether a decision on a package or adoption takes place. Two questions frame the outcome: is there political will for a high-ambition rule, and does it keep its environmental integrity?

Proposals on the table

Party/Proposal	Position
Net-Zero Framework	A binding global fuel standard that cuts the GHG intensity of marine fuels, paired with a price on emissions. Approved 63 to 16 at MEPC in April 2025 and still the base text for negotiations.
Tuvalu	Proposes a levy on all emissions ($300/tn for Tier 1 emissions, $380 for Tier 2 emissions)
Brazil	Proposes preserving the key functions and elements of the Net-Zero Framework while weakening the Framework's emissions-reduction trajectory in its initial years — a "soft start, faster finish."
Liberia	Has put forward an alternative proposal that would wait for alternative fuels to emerge on their own before encouraging their uptake.
Japan	Has put forward ideas and options, specifically on pricing element, that would allow vessel owners to invest directly in maritime/port decarbonization projects, but without much detail as to how this would work in practice.
United States	Opposes pricing shipping emissions and promotes U.S. fossil fuels, including LNG. President Trump said after ISWG 22 that global pricing would raise transport costs.
Saudi Arabia	Opposes the IMO pricing shipping emissions. Led the October 2025 motion to adjourn.

What a credible outcome needs

1. **A binding global fuel standard agreement this year.** Ships steadily cut the greenhouse gas intensity of their fuel under science-based targets, and those that miss can comply via payment. A global approach keeps a level playing field.
2. **Rewards and pricing in a credible market that drives uptake of genuinely clean fuels, judged on full lifecycle.**
3. **Support for zero- and near-zero emission fuels**, with robust accounting that includes all LNG methane emissions and indirect land-use change associated with biofuels.
4. **A pricing element for a just and equitable transition with enforceable guidelines.** Proceeds are invested in developing countries, small island states and port communities, backed by verification so loopholes do not reward delay.

Expert perspectives in London

Pacific Environment policy experts will be in London for all three meetings, including the four experts highlighted below, and are available for interviews, briefings, and comments as decisions break. Summaries below are paraphrased from their published remarks. Direct quotes are to be supplied and approved by each speaker before release.

Davina Hurt | **Climate Policy Director**

- The central questions are whether member states have the political will for a high-ambition rule and whether it keeps its environmental integrity for cleaner air and emission reductions.
- Diplomats have reported U.S. threats of visa restrictions, port fees and sanctions to secure the adjournment. She argues costs should fall on polluters and fossil fuel companies, not on port communities.

Jamie Yates | **Climate and Renewable Energy Manager**

- Week one hopes to progress convergence from member states to a tentative agreement for MEPC. Week two turns to adoption, where the aim is to prevent weakening by proposals that oppose a move away from fossil fuels.
- Opposition is concentrated among oil-producing states and the LNG shipping industry. A stronger framework would also widen fuel choices and cut exposure to price swings and supply disruption.

Hyunju Kang | **Climate Campaign Director, Asia**

- Asian countries are central to the success of the IMO negotiations because they represent major shipping, shipbuilding, and fuel-producing economies. The outcome will shape investment decisions across Asia for decades, influencing whether the sector accelerates toward zero-emissions fuels and technologies or remains locked into fossil fuel infrastructure.

Mikyoung Kim | **Country Director, Republic of Korea**

- Korea builds a large share of the world's ships and has already completed the first commercial bunkering of green ammonia at Ulsan Port. A strong framework will set the global direction and establish goals, but the transition across the fleet will be gradual. Korea can move faster by designating domestic and international green corridors early, creating demand for zero-emission fuels and building the port infrastructure needed to supply them.

Contacts

To talk to our experts in London, use our meeting request form or media contacts: Salo Aburto-Lenett (GMT) or Gwen Dobbs (PT)

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London is 8 hours ahead of the U.S. West Coast. For same-day reaction from London, contact Salo; for U.S. outlets after London hours, contact Gwen.

Sources

- Finish the deal: What to watch as the IMO revisits efforts to clean up shipping fuel, Pacific Environment, November 4, 2026
- The ABCs of sustainable shipping, Pacific Environment, October 28, 2026
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