Environment Operations

Scrubber installation costs plummet

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In just over a month it will be the fifth anniversary of the global sulphur cap, and debate continues to rage about the environmental benefits brought about by the regulation and the subsequent mass adoption of scrubbers.

Shipowners continue to favour scrubbers for large newbuilds, with the price of installation dropping dramatically recently.

According to a new report from broker BRS, the cost to install a scrubber on a capesize vessel in 2020 was approximately $1.3m, with an installation time of four to six weeks. Recently, the installation cost has dropped to around $800,000.

In gt terms, 29.1% of the extant fleet now sports a scrubber, according to data from Clarksons Research, while 25.7% of the orderbook in gt terms will come with scrubbers attached.

Nations continue to take action against the equipment however with a raft of scientific papers questioning what is being pumped into the

world's seas from these exhaust scrubbing kits.

Sweden will introduce a ban on the discharge of washwater from open-loop scrubbers in its waters from July 1 next year, with the operation of closed-loop scrubbers prohibited from the start of 2029. Denmark has also followed Sweden with a similar decision and timetable for a ban in its waters.

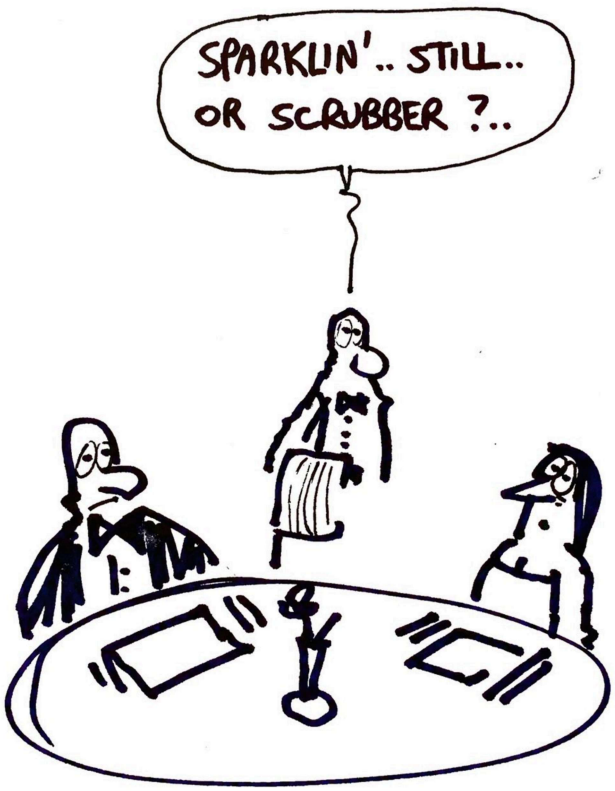
In a comprehensive new study, a research team led by Professor Christine Achten from the University of Münster, in cooperation with the German Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency, has now examined the wastewater from scrubber systems for contamination with polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH) and their toxic effects.

The research team analysed wastewater samples from four ships between 2020 and 2023 for PAH contamination.

The wastewater from the closed-loop system had higher PAH concentrations than that from the open-loop systems, in particular the highly toxic, high-molecular PAH from combustion processes.

"From an environmental point of view, a shift in pollutant inputs from air to water is unacceptable," Achten summarised.

"The evolving regulatory landscape highlights how tricky it is for shipowners to commit to new technologies, especially if the payback is uncertain and the frontloaded capex is significant," BRS noted in a new report issued today.



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