

Media Monitoring

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Singapore Chemoil warns bunker specs changes could push up costs

Chemoil has urged the International Standard Organization's working group currently reviewing changes to bunker fuel specifications, ISO 8217, to ensure there was a broad, cross-industry consensus for a fair and equitable revision to the standard, the Singapore-listed global marine fuel supplier said in a statement released Monday.

Responding to recent claims that current recommendations were too lenient and in favor of the bunker supplier, Chemoil has highlighted a number of issues that the proposed revision has thrown up.

The proposals, if implemented, could lead to higher bunker fuel costs for ship operators and increase disputes over fuel specifications, Chemoil said.

"Chemoil is alarmed at a number of rushed and ill-advised changes proposed to ISO 8217 that could lead to a reduction in the availability of bunker fuel in many ports, increase bunker fuel costs for ship operators and generate an increase in unnecessary contractual disputes at multiple stages of the bunker supply transaction," Adrian Tolson, Chemoil's vice-president of sales and marketing, said in the statement.

Chemoil was against reduction from 80 ppm to 60 ppm of aluminium and silicon found in bunker fuel, he said. "This current limit has served this industry well for many years and a decrease to 60 ppm is completely unnecessary," he added.

Tolson explained that aluminium and silicon are typically found in the lower sulfur blendstocks used to produce low sulfur bunker fuel. The new proposal means increased use of more costly blendstock.

Also, the calculated carbon aromaticity index or CCAI is not always a reliable indicator of ignition quality, Tolson said.

"The current proposals not only validate CCAI as a measure of ignition quality, but also would define as 'off-specification' a high percentage of higher viscosity RMK bunker fuels currently being sold and used with no problem," he said.

He added that the loss of these bunker fuel grades from the market would lead to an increase in costs to buyers.

ISO 8217:2005 specifies the requirements for petroleum fuels for use in marine diesel engines and boilers, prior to appropriate treatment before use. It also specifies four categories of distillate fuel as well as 10 categories of residual fuel.

