



steamship association of louisiana

(Formerly known as the New Orleans Steamship Association)

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Mr. Klag,

I have been asked to file some suggested revisions to ISPM 15 to be presented by you to the IPPC for review before the March 18, 2006. After a review of several ongoing problems and open dialogue between the maritime industry and members of various government agencies, we request the following revisions be presented.

These suggestions come from representatives from several maritime agencies and groups including but not limited to the National Association of Maritime Organizations (NAMO) and Customs' Electronics Systems Action Committee (CESAC). There are several major concerns about the implementation under the present version of ISPM 15.

Suggestions:

1) Consider allowing further review of ISPM 15, due to the fact that the ratified international standard (International Standard Phytosanitary Measures Rule 15) has lead to many changes by individual countries. Most notably the addition to the rule that WPM going into certain countries must also be free of bark. As has been implemented in Australia, Bolivia, Chile, New Zealand, and Turkey to name a few, and noted by the recent EU decision to delay an official standard on the debarking requirement until 2009. Another issue involves countries that have implemented changes to the ratified stamp, which has lead to the inability to verify the authenticity of the stamp.

2) Documented cases and scientific studies have shown that under many conditions heat treatment produces conditions favorable to the formation of mold. Since heat treatment appears to be the most common choice of the two treatment methods approved under ISPM 15, there is a need to do some more research on this matter. Shippers have seen mold-infested compliant WPM that stevedores have refused to handle, which have lead to substantial delays and extra costs. On top of the substantial costs difference already incurred by using compliant versus non-compliant WPM. The average cost differential can see prices ranging from three to five times higher. Until there is sufficient time to resolve this matter it would seem appropriate to request a delay to enforcement and some changes to the present regulations.

3) Because the only option for dealing with non-compliant WPM is re-exportation there is evidence this is increasing dumping at sea. It has been confirmed that salt water exposure will not kill certain pests. Thus the possibility exists that this regulation could actually serve to increase pest risks by having infested WPM washing up on shores around the world.

4) Other choices for dealing with non-compliant WPM should be considered besides re-exportation. One suggestion proposed involves the use of a chipper to destroy potential pest risks in non-compliant WPM. The chipper option is already given to the particular NPPO's discretion under item 6.2 Disposal of ISPM 15. Though chippers presently are not readily available if approved it appears this option would resolve the problems associated with dumping at sea, as well as the troubles associated with both re-exporting and finding a country to accept non-compliant WPM. These facts alone would encourage terminals, shippers, vessels, stevedores and third parties to supply and offer chipper machines for destruction of both damaged complaint WPM and non-compliant WPM. The by-product sawdust is a usable commodity that many ships and stevedores often have to purchase for normal operations and spill absorption.

5) Through direct contact with the IPPC Secretariat on several occasions we were unable to reach the assigned contact in certain countries. Thus, there was no way to verify an "altered" country stamp and we were unable to verify the version of ISPM 15 being implemented in the respective country, for example Poland and Kuwait. The best information we could obtain in Kuwait was that no dunnage could be landed on the dock either compliant or non-compliant. Shippers have valid concerns of incurring the significant increase in purchasing compliant WPM when even the IPPC is unable to reach contacts in the country of receivership. If the IPPC cannot contact their own listed country representatives how are shippers supposed to do so?

6) That the IPPC should look to issue and monitor Phytosanitary Certificates as a secondary form to validate ISPM 15 compliance. As shippers have seen a common problem involving moisture smearing the ink or paint used to apply the IPPC Stamp. This policy would also help when dunnage was cut or the mark is sheared off in transit, as is common with steel shipments. A similar suggestion would be to consider issuing regulated Phytosanitary Certificates through establishment of a NPPO monitored program based on principles similar to C-TPAT.. A program monitored and validated through APHIS and CBP under guidance from the NPPO and IPPC. Shippers and exporters who establish stringent WPM controls and deal with these matters under direction from the appropriate government agencies would have both stamped WPM and the created certificate. The creation of such a program might also help free up enforcement manpower to monitor less controlled WPM shipments.

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