US Environmental Protection Agency

Gulf-Wide Pollutant Reduction and Water Quality Initiative: Modeling for a Mexican Emission Control Area

The Gulf is in danger from growing shipping emissions as shipping traffic will increase threefold in the next 15 years. Sulfur and nitrogen emitted from ships deposits to water and results in nutrient and acidification impacts. Though the US has instituted international standards to reduce ship emissions in the US Gulf through an Emission Control Area (ECA), shipping emissions from the Mexican portion of the Gulf will continue to impact the US if Mexico does not also implement an ECA. Mexico would like to have an ECA, but they lack the technical resources to put together the required technical information. With relatively little funding, this project would conduct the modeling needed for Mexico to establish an ECA. It would also assess the water quality and ecosystem impacts to the US Gulf State waters of sulfur and nitrogen from shipping in Mexico, contributing to robust, science-based decision making for restoration in the Gulf. An ECA establishes internationally agreed standards under the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to reduce emissions of sulfur dioxides/particulate matter and nitrogen dioxides from ships operating in coastal waters by more than 80%. Extending the US ECA to Mexico would greatly reduce ship emissions in the Mexican half of the Gulf leading to significant benefits in the US Gulf. Requested funding amount: $2,000,000.