



# Extending Emission Control Areas

## Document Version

Final published version

[Link to publication record in Manchester Research Explorer](#)

## Citation for published version (APA):

Bullock, S. (2024, Mar 4). Extending Emission Control Areas: 1 side summary of Tyndall consultation response.

## Citing this paper

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## Extending Emission Control Areas

Emission Control Areas (ECA) limit pollution such as sulphur and nitrogen oxides from ships. The UK Government has a call-for-evidence on three options to expand the current North Sea ECA (in green below). The widest coverage option is shown below in blue, other options are far more limited – eg option 1 just covering the near proximity to west coast major ports. ECAs lower the maximum amount of sulphur pollution from fuel from 0.5% to 0.1%. Ships generally comply either by using lower sulphur fuel, or by capturing pollution using scrubbers.



Figure: Existing ECA (green), and option 3 (blue)

Tyndall Manchester shipping researchers' response to this call-for-evidence argues that:

- Air pollution damages human health. Prevailing winds typically carry ship pollution from the west into UK population centres. **The ECA should therefore be expanded to the widest coverage – option 3.**
- A 0.1% sulphur standard for ships, the current limit, is 100 times higher than applies for road transport, a limit put in place to protect human health. **The UK should legislate a zero-emission berth standard for pollution in ports.**
- It is essential that maritime policy is designed with the greatest possible environmental benefits in mind. It should therefore meet both air quality and climate objectives, rather than trade them off against each other. For example, recently LNG has been used as means to improve air quality, but this has negative impacts on climate goals as it is both a high carbon fuel and prone to methane slip. Methane is a more potent greenhouse gas than CO<sub>2</sub>. Conversely, options exist that meet both objectives: **accelerated deployment of wind-assist technologies and provision of shore-power should be a policy priority.**
- There are different ways to meet ECA requirements. Scrubbers are one option, but they increase CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and can pollute the marine environment. **Scrubbers have been banned or restricted in many countries and ports, and the UK should follow suit.**
- The UK should investigate complementing air pollution and ECA policy by setting strict standards for greenhouse gas emissions from ships entering UK territorial waters and/or ports, for example **requiring vessels to meet A ratings under the IMO's CII regulation.**

Full details are set out in ECA call for evidence, [response from Tyndall Manchester](#) researchers. Feb 2024.