

# sustainableshipping

## **Congress to consider Marine Highway initiative**

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The US Congress is currently considering a proposal for a Marine Highway as part of its 2009 economic stimulus package, according to a International Business Times report.

The Green Marine Highway Initiative suggests removing trucks from highways and shifting their freight onto 66 fuel-efficient ships.

"The report is based on a ten-year effort to build fuel-efficient, low-emission ships to transport freight on US marine highways," said Stas Margaronis, president of California-based Santa Maria Shipowning & Trading, Inc.

Stas has been spearheading the Marine Highway movement with his report Green Ships Can Fight Global Warming.

"Coastal or short sea shipping can remove tens of thousands of trucks from our roads and highways every day, significantly impacting our environment and infrastructure, making our roads safer and less congested, and bringing savings to consumers, shippers and taxpayers."

Margaronis proposes creating low-carbon freight corridors in partnership with trucking companies.

Ships powered by ultra-low sulphur diesel would be contracted by shippers and truckers to haul containerized truckloads along coastal corridors, with trucks used for pick-ups and deliveries, according to a Green Ships report.

The initiative also requires that all coastal ships be built in the United States and manned by US crews under the Jones Act, a marine act regulating maritime commerce in US waters and between US ports.

This would create new jobs for shipbuilders and steel makers in the Great Lakes, the Gulf Coast, and along the East and West Coasts.

The initial fleet of ships would be financed with \$165 million through US Maritime Administration loan guarantees.

President-elect Barack Obama has called for the economic stimulus package to be implemented immediately when he takes office in January 2009.

*Natalie Bruckner-Menchelli, 4th December 2008 23:45 GMT*