

# Vancouver Sun

## Shipping firms, workers protest change in rules; Opposition is to Bill C-16, which states polluters are guilty unless proven otherwise

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Ships in Vancouver harbour sounded their horns at one minute past noon Thursday to protest changes to Canada's environmental regulations, which shipping companies and unionized employees say will unfairly target them for prosecution.

The protest was a joint action of the International Transport Workers' Federation, representing seafarers, the International Ship-Owners Alliance of Canada and the Council of Marine Carriers Vancouver, representing tug and towing operators.

Bill C-16, which modifies environmental protection laws, was passed by Parliament in 2005 and now is before the Senate. The shipping industry opposes the changes because of their "reverse onus" provisions, which mean those accused of polluting are presumed guilty unless they can prove otherwise.

International Transport Workers' Federation official Peter Lahay said that because the legislation provides for jail terms and fines of up to \$12 million a day, it should be enforced the same way as criminal law, with the onus on the Crown to prove the act was intentional.

Capt. Phillip Nelson of the Council of Marine Carriers said the "loss of the right to be presumed innocent and the possibility

of being imprisoned without the ability to defend oneself are abhorrent and against Canadian values and morals."

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