

## Feds to probe air pollution from ships; Study will analyze data from 55 air quality monitors in Halifax

**Michael Lightstone Staff Reporter**

*The Harper government plans to spend up to \$266,000 over the next two years studying air pollution hooked to ship traffic in Halifax.*

*And Health Canada has identified Dalhousie University as the proposed contractor for the marine emissions project, an agency spokesman said recently.*

Researchers from the university's department of process engineering and applied science - part of the engineering faculty - are in line for the contract, though the work hasn't been awarded yet.

The contract should be handed out soon.

"If no other supplier submits a statement of capabilities that meets the requirements before the closing date of July 19," then Dalhousie will get the government contract, Health Canada's Gary Holub said Friday.

Part of the project involves setting up 55 air quality test sites throughout Halifax that will be monitored during a two-week period in August.

Holub said the research "will advance our understanding of the role that this type of emissions plays in the overall effect of air pollution in Halifax and elsewhere."

Air pollution from ships is on the radar of public health officials in Canada and other countries. Environment Canada recognizes that "emissions from marine vessels can be of particular concern near port cities" such as Halifax.

Because air pollution has significant impacts on human health, Ottawa intends to tighten the reins on vessels visiting Canadian ports and those plying waters offshore. A major part of the problem is the amount of sulphur in fuel used to propel ships.

Holub said vessels will be required to use fuels with a maximum sulphur content of 1,000 parts per million starting, Jan. 1, 2015, "which is expected to be achieved through the use of a diesel fuel" to be developed for ships.

In collaboration with the United States, France and the International Maritime Organization, "the government . . . will implement strict emission controls on marine shipping in the coming years in order to improve air quality," he said in an email message.

"Large ships within the North American emission control area, covering waters of Canada, the United States and France (Saint-Pierre and

Miquelon), south of 60 degrees north and extending 200 nautical miles offshore, will be subject to environmental standards that will reduce air pollution."

Holub told The Chronicle Herald "the new measures are expected to dramatically reduce . . . nitrogen and sulphur oxide emissions, as well as emissions of fine particles from exhaust."

The International Maritime Organization is the United Nations' agency responsible for shipping security and the prevention of pollution caused by vessels.

Mandatory measures to cut emissions of greenhouse gases from international shipping will be considered by the organization's marine environment protection committee when it meets this week at the organization's headquarters in London, England, according to a recent release.

The contract proposed for Dalhousie's researchers is to go from this summer to February or March 2013.