

24 June 2020

To all vessel operators and agents,

Biosecurity New Zealand (BNZ) is conducting research on risk factors that influence the accumulation of vessel biofouling. Vessel biofouling is one of the largest biosecurity risks to New Zealand's marine environment. The Cawthron Institute has been contracted by BNZ to undertake field surveys of international commercial vessels arriving to New Zealand.

The project will involve underwater biofouling assessments of vessel hulls and niche areas, and completion of a questionnaire on vessel maintenance and movement history. The assessment is anticipated to take 3–4 hours, and will not impede the normal operations of the vessel. The contractor (Cawthron) intends to email or fax the questionnaire to shipping agents prior to vessel arrival and would appreciate a prompt completion and return of the form, ideally before the dive survey. Port authorities are also being notified of the work to ensure that no security issues arise.

A broad sampling effort plays a critical role in the success of this research. This research will allow BNZ to better focus its biosecurity targeting towards high-risk vessels, as well as help to expedite clearance checks on vessels that pose negligible biosecurity risks. Research outputs will inform risk profiling processes of vessels en-route to NZ and biofouling inspection procedures at the border. This will enable BNZ to make more informed decisions about compliance and prioritization of resources (i.e. which vessels to physically verify for compliance with the biofouling standard). The shipping industry and BNZ will benefit by saving time and resources required for biofouling inspections.

If selected, participation in the field surveys is compulsory, as BNZ is exercising its powers under the Biosecurity Act 1993 and under the Craft Risk Management Standard for Biofouling, to gain a representative sample of all vessel types.

If you require additional information or have any questions or concerns about this project or our contractors, please contact the project lead, Tracey Bates (tracey.bates@mpi.govt.nz)

Regards,

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