

# Scrubbers have saved container shipping \$12bn: Sea-Intelligence



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They might have proven to be among shipping's most contentious pieces of equipment, but there's no denying that scrubbers have been wildly beneficial to the bottom lines of those who decided to invest in them.

Danish liner consultancy Sea-Intelligence has new analysis showing that in the container sector alone, \$12bn has been saved due to scrubbers.

The analysis was calculated taking the approximate global fuel consumption per day across the entire container sector and making the assumption that if X% of the capacity is fitted with scrubbers then X% of the fuel will be the cheaper IFO380 instead of VLSFO.

The consultancy gave January 1, 2020 – the first day of the global sulphur cap coming into force – as the opening date for its study, noting how in 2023 there has been a renewed uptick in the number of vessels being fitted with scrubbers.

The impact of scrubber discharges into the ocean has been the source of much debate. A study published in June from Chalmers University of

Technology in Sweden focusing on four ports calculated that water discharged from scrubbers accounted for more than 90% of the contaminants found in water samples.

“The results speak for themselves. Stricter regulation of discharge water from scrubbers is crucial to reduce the deterioration of the marine environment,” said Anna Lunde Hermansson, a doctoral student at the Department of Mechanics and Maritime Sciences at Chalmers.

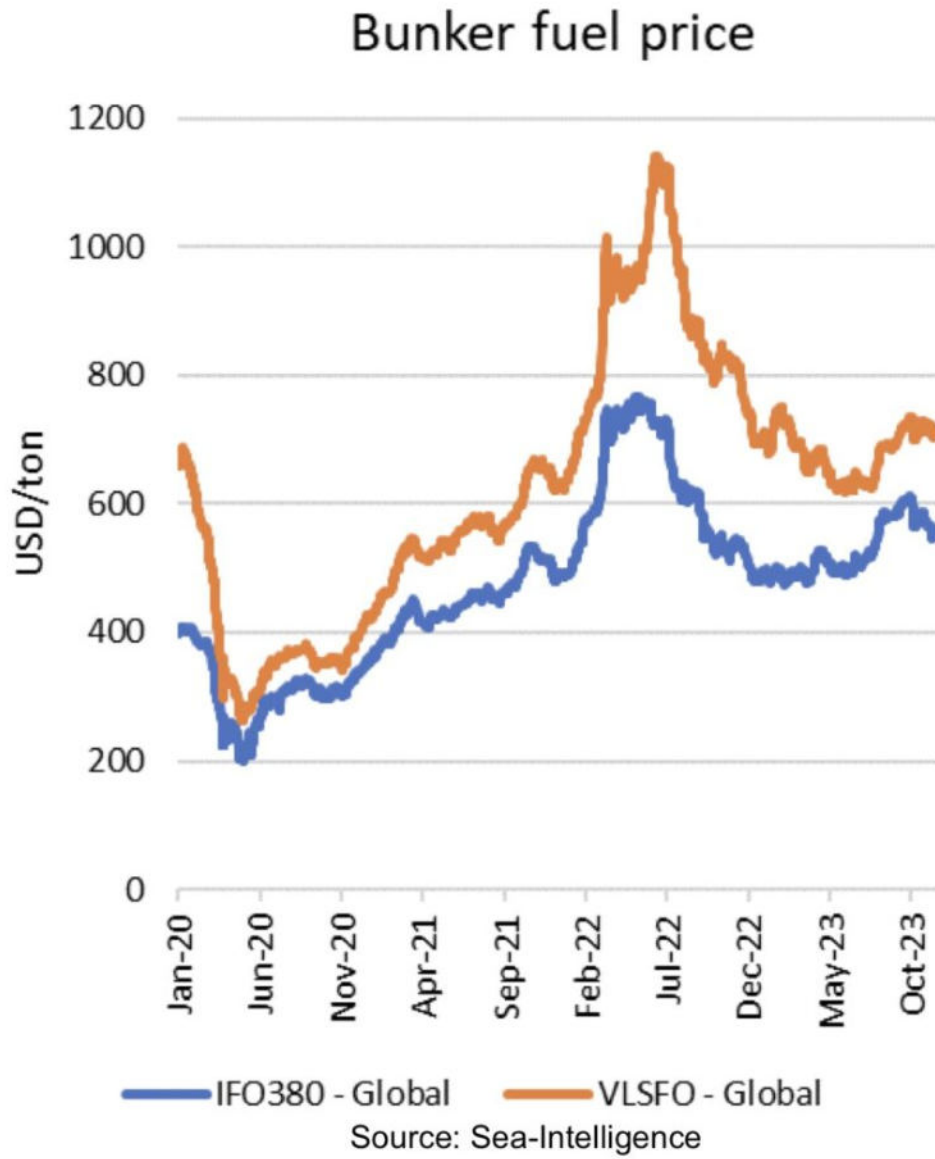
Scrubber water not only takes up the sulphur from a ship’s exhaust gases, leading to acidification of the scrubber water, but also other contaminants such as heavy metals and toxic organic compounds get mixed in. For open-loop scrubbers, which form the majority of kits sold around the world, the contaminated scrubber water is then pumped directly into the sea.

The Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management and the Swedish Transport Agency have submitted a proposal to the Swedish government to prohibit the discharge of scrubber water into internal waters, joining a host of other countries who have instituted scrubber water discharge bans.

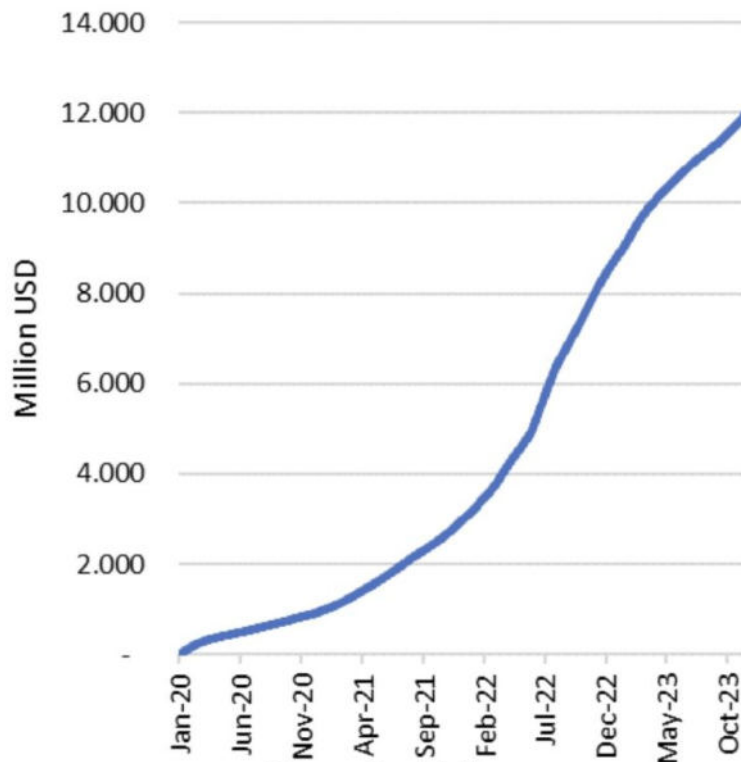
Last week, European members of parliament supported a proposal to extend current EU rules prohibiting the discharge of oil and noxious liquid substances to include the discharge of sewage, garbage, and residues from scrubbers.

The latest data from Clarksons Research shows more than 5,400 ships – around 5% of the global merchant fleet – are now kitted out with scrubbers.

While scrubbers have been pilloried repeatedly for their acidic discharges into the water studies from NASA last October suggested the the 2020 global sulphur cap had improved atmospheric conditions. The study from the American space agency found that so-called ship track clouds dropped dramatically in 2020, the first year of the implementation of the fuel regulations that saw sulphur content slashed from 3.5% to 0.5% for the majority of the global fleet not using scrubbers.



### Fuel price saving due to scrubbers



Source: Sea-Intelligence