

Synergy Group joins IMPA SAVE's campaign to reduce shipping's reliance on single-use plastic drinking water bottles

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Synergy Group has added its 375 plus fleet of vessels to the IMPA SAVE initiative to curb the deployment of single-use drinking water bottles at sea.

IMPA SAVE was launched by the International Marine Purchasing Association (IMPA) in 2020. It aims to reduce the almost one billion litres of drinking water delivered to the global shipping fleet each year which generates more than 40 tons of waste bottles.

"I think society in general as well as shipping needs to recognise and address the fact that single-use plastic is not only a terribly poor use of finite resources, it also creates long-term pollution and disposal issues," said Captain Rajesh Unni, Founder and CEO of Singapore-based ship manager Synergy Group.

"Ensuring we conserve and protect the environment is amongst our company's top priorities, so we are delighted to add the IMPA SAVE initiative to our active sustainability programme.

"Reducing and eliminating the use of single-use plastic water bottles and all other forms of wasteful packaging on our ships and in our offices is just a first step. We need to address the global plastic and microplastic problem on a systemic level in the years ahead."

The IMPA SAVE pledge

The IMPA SAVE programme enables ship owners and managers to pledge to cut usage of plastic water bottles via a dedicated website developed for the programme by IMPA at www.impasave.org. Including the recently added Synergy vessels, shipping companies representing more than 8,000 vessels have now pledged to stop using single-use water bottles as part of IMPA SAVE.

IMPA SAVE is fully aligned with the United Nations' (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). IMPA, for example, intends that IMPA SAVE becomes the vehicle through which IMPA members and marine colleagues work with the industry's best and brightest to harness collective knowledge of sustainable solutions for the benefit of all in the maritime sector.

"We all need to play our part in meeting the UN's SDGs," said Captain Unni. "That will be a major focus for Synergy this year. SDGs provide a blueprint for a more sustainable planet. There is a lot of talk about long-term challenges in regards to fuels and new regulations, but we can address plastics right now which is why we are so supportive of IMPA SAVE."

A plastic bridge to the moon

Mikael Karlsson, the programme's chair and IMPA's sustainability special ambassador, said: "Just picture a bridge five feet wide made of plastic drinking water bottles; our industry's annual

consumption would reach all the way to the moon. If that is not enough then consider the impact on the environment of the delivery of the bottles, the packaging and the CO2.”

Karlsson and his colleagues on the SAVE council believe the damage to the environment can be significantly reduced via practical solutions for providing healthy and clear water for seafarers that are also less expensive for ship owners and managers than procuring thousands of single-use plastic bottles.

“With many vessels already operating with a functioning reverse osmosis or evaporators onboard the addition of a filtration system means drinking water is freely available offering a return on investment that benefits all,” added Karlsson.

Leading shipowners collaborate

The IMPA SAVE council is made up of a leading group of global shipowners and maritime suppliers representing companies with a combined fleet of more than 1000 vessels and massive collective purchasing power. Representatives from Maersk Procurement, Teekay Shipping, Wilhelmsen Ship Management, Ocean Catering and Weco Shipping are represented on the council. The group is chaired by IMPA Special Ambassador Mikael Karlsson of Francois Marine & Offshore, part of the Stena Group.

By bringing companies together under the IMPA SAVE programme IMPA aims to create an opportunity to share knowledge on better, more sustainable practices and alternatives through regular webinars and conferences designed to motivate each other to be better stewards of our oceans through procurement and supply chain management and committing and impact reporting. Stephen Alexander, IMPA’s chief operating officer, said: “SAVE’s mantra is guarding our people and our planet. Companies such as Synergy Group have a huge role to play in this.”