Full steam ahead

Carnival Corporation, the world’s largest cruise company, is making big investments in scrubbers and LNG, says Tom Strang, SVP for maritime affairs, in an interview with S&P Global Platts.

How much do you expect complying with the 0.5% sulfur cap to cost your company — and is this a cost that can be passed on to your customers?

We have invested hundreds of millions of dollars to date in our efforts to install advanced air quality systems throughout our fleet and have more installations planned over the next few years. It is part of our ongoing research and development efforts to develop new technology solutions that benefit the environment and our world’s leading cruise lines.

Carnival has made large investments in scrubbers to allow some of your ships to continue burning fuel oil. Do you see this technology as just covering a brief transition phase while the industry pivots to burning cleaner fuels, or is it something you could imagine using for decades to come?

The use of our environmentally friendly advanced air quality systems is not intended to be a short term measure. They provide as good or better emissions performance than other compliant-fuel solutions.

And how about LNG? Do you hope to find ways of making your LNG-fueled ships compliant with the IMO’s greenhouse gas strategy over the longer term, or is this a solution with a brief window of opportunity?

LNG is the most environmentally friendly fuel available today and Carnival Corporation has led the development of LNG for cruise ships. We will take delivery of the first ship to use LNG in port and at sea later this year and we have 10 more on order. We continue to work with our suppliers on technological improvements to equipment that will improve upon and reduce GHG emissions.

“There are currently no zero-emission fuels available in any quantity, and if there were there is a very long way to go to develop sufficient infrastructure to deliver them.”

— Tom Strang, Carnival Corporation
Senior Vice President, Maritime Affairs
How soon would you expect to see oil largely phased out as a marine fuel?

There are currently no zero emission fuels available in any quantity and if there were there is a very long way to go to develop sufficient infrastructure to deliver them.

Do you have any concerns about whether the right technology solutions can be found to deliver the IMO’s GHG strategy soon enough – with some zero-GHG-emission designs coming into use as early as the late 2030s?

Although there is no clear solution yet in sight, as a naval architect I expect that we will find a pathway that allows us to address GHG emissions while continuing the growth of shipping as the most environmentally friendly means to transport goods and people, deliver fantastic experiences.