



Cargo ships | Photo source [chuttersnap](#) on Unsplash

## WORLD'S FIRST ELECTRIC, AUTONOMOUS SHIPS

 MOBILITY & TRANSPORT

### A Dutch company has developed all-electric, fully autonomous cargo barges

**Spotted:** Dutch maritime company [Port Liner](#) has developed the world's first fully electric container ship. The vessels' will be powered by 20-foot-long batteries and are designed to operate without a crew. The ships can travel for around 14 hours on a single charge, long enough to cover the popular Rotterdam/Antwerp/Duisburg shipping corridor.

By doing away with the engine room, the barges can carry around 8 percent more cargo than similarly-sized diesel vessels and have greater loading efficiency. These advantages mean that the cost of ownership of the all-electric vessels is equal or less than conventional diesel-powered ships.

By around August 2019, five of the electric barges will be plying the Dutch waterways. Future vessels are also in the works which will carry four batteries and be capable of 35 hours of continuous operation. According to [Port Liner](#), they could produce around 500 of the electric barges each year, and the electric motors and batteries used can be retro-fitted onto older boats.

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**Takeaway:**

Ships often use what is called bunker fuel, which is cheap and dirty. It contains 3,500 times more sulphur than the diesel used in cars. Shipping accounts for 13 percent of global sulphur dioxide emissions, along with emissions of other noxious pollutants. Recently, there have been moves to convert ships from diesel to liquid natural gas. But converting inland freight barges to electricity is another big step in curbing emissions from shipping. Eliminating the engine room also enables the ships to become autonomous, which could allow additional efficiencies.