



# Alameda Labor Council AFL-CIO

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## **Environmental and Economic “Perfect Storm” Brews as Industry Legal Manipulation Holds up Landmark Los Angeles Clean Truck Program, Stalls Oakland progress**

### **Statement by Sharon Cornu, Executive Secretary-Treasurer, Alameda Labor Council**

“On the one year anniversary of the Los Angeles Clean Truck Program, we applaud the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, the L.A. Port and City Council for their tremendous accomplishment in placing nearly 6,000 environmentally compliant trucks in service while putting thousands of polluting rigs out of commission. It’s a model for how ports can be green and grow in a 21<sup>st</sup> century economy.

“Oakland workers, neighborhood residents, political and environmental leaders strongly support the L.A. model and urge its adoption here.

“But there is still much to overcome in Southern California and in Oakland, where workers and residents also face devastating health impacts due to toxic diesel truck pollution. The American Trucking Association’s legal maneuvering has threatened L.A.’s progress, and has left an environmental and economic ‘perfect storm’ for Port of Oakland officials grappling with how to meet and sustain upcoming California air-emission regulations.

“As big industry ignores its responsibilities, hundreds of Oakland drivers will be out of work when their trucks are banned from the Port in January. Misclassified as ‘independent contractors,’ these professional truck drivers are highly skilled but denied health insurance, sick leave and vacation time. They are ineligible for unemployment or workers’ compensation benefits. The cargo owners and their carriers take no responsibility for cleaner commerce, while 20-year port veterans like Manuel Rivas face poverty.

“Manuel mothballed his 1989 rig after it broke down last month because it makes no sense to repair an old rig that will be denied access to the Port of Oakland shortly. He can’t afford a new truck that meets the clean-air standards because he averages \$24,000 annually. Manuel, a widower raising three sons, is now unemployed and his search for a new job has been unsuccessful so far.

“Alameda County is facing nearly 12 percent unemployment and Oakland’s rate has climbed to nearly 18 percent. Our already-stressed public assistance, medical and charitable institutions will not be able to absorb these additional cases.

“Under current conditions, we won’t get the air and health improvements the environmental standards are intended to achieve. But there is a solution. Congress should modernize federal transportation law so ports can adopt adequate trucking standards before this crisis becomes an economic and environmental disaster.”

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*The Alameda Labor Council, AFL-CIO, is the umbrella organization for all unions in the county. The Council coordinates political, community, and educational programs for more than 125 public and private sector unions, representing 100,000 workers in healthcare, transportation, education, manufacturing, and service.*

