



June, 2008

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Greetings!

The Port of Oakland and the Coalition for Clean & Safe Ports have been in the news a lot lately. Click on these links for recent media coverage:

Port of Oakland fights trucking industry over driver status by Eric Young, San Francisco Business Times, May 16, 2008

<http://www.bizjournals.com/sanfrancisco/stories/2008/05/19/story6.html>

Pelosi is supporting L.A. truck plan by Kristopher Hansen, Daily Breeze, May 7, 2008

http://www.dailybreeze.com/ci_9188927

Rising Fuel Prices Fuel Chaos at Port of Oakland, Oakland Post, May 14, 2008

http://www.oakland.cleanandsafeports.org/fileadmin/files_editor/Oakland_Post_Rising_Fuel_Prices_Fuel_Chaos_at_Port_of_Oakland_May_14_2008.pdf

Wildcat Strike By Truckers At Port Of Oakland, KTVU/Channel 2 TV, May, 6, 2008

<http://www.ktvu.com/video/16178321/index.html>

Wildcat Strike By Independent Truckers At Port of Oakland, KTVU/Channel 2 TV, May 6, 2008 <http://www.ktvu.com/video/16181410/index.html>

Truckers protest to get relief at pump by Francine Brevetti, Oakland Tribune, May 5, 2008

http://www.insidebayarea.com/search/ci_9163164?IADID=Search-www.insidebayarea.com-www.insidebayarea.com

A Smart California Port Policy for the Green-Growth Future, Spearheaded by Progressives Part I by Patricia Castellanos & Doug Bloch, Coalition for Clean & Safe Ports, California Progress Report, May 27, 2008

http://www.californiaprogressreport.com/2008/05/a_smart_califor.html

A Smart California Port Policy for the Green-Growth Future, Spearheaded by Progressives Part II by Patricia Castellanos & Doug Bloch, Coalition for Clean & Safe Ports, California Progress Report, May 28, 2008

http://www.californiaprogressreport.com/2008/05/a_smart_califor_1.html

To find out more about the Coalition's recent exciting activities, read the articles below.

Interfaith Clergy Bless Oakland Truck Fleet



Faith leaders representing a broad spectrum of religious traditions took their ministries to the Port to listen to truck drivers' concerns about the harsh circumstances they face on the job and to offer their support for the drivers' struggle to improve their working conditions. On May 15, spiritual leaders who are members of the East Bay Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice, a partner in the Coalition for Clean & Safe Ports, met at a taco truck outside the Port terminals for an opening prayer. The 17 clergy members and religious lay people divided into teams of two each joined by Teamsters organizers and EBASE staff and fanned out across the Port walking from truck to truck visiting drivers as they waited in line for cargo loads. They listened to the drivers' stories and offered prayers from their different religions.

The drivers spoke of how difficult it is to raise a family on poverty-level wages without medical

insurance. After paying expenses, many drivers make as little as \$8 an hour. Several drivers expressed fears about the negative health risks associated with breathing diesel pollution day in and day out.

Salvador Ayala, who has been driving at the Port for the past three years, faces \$29,000 in medical bills after his wife's recent operation to remove gall stones. This is on top of the \$10,000 he spent last year to overhaul his truck engine.

"It made a deep and lasting impression on me when I heard, directly from the drivers on the job about the struggles they face and the stress they experience trying to make a living on such low wages," said Reverend Kurt Kuhwald, Berkeley Fellowship of Unitarian Universalists. "They're really not asking for much. They just want decent wages, to be compensated for the costs of doing business and to be treated fairly."

Father Robert McChesney, S.J., is the Associate Pastor at Saint Patrick's Catholic Church. The Port of Oakland falls within the St. Patrick's parish boundaries. St. Martin de Porres Middle School is located on the church grounds. Fr. McChesney became concerned about the health of his parishioners and the Port truck drivers when he accompanied 38 sixth- and seventh-graders on a bus tour of the Port last March. During the Port tour, the students learned that the Port is a big source of diesel air pollution which is associated with high incidences of asthma and cancer. A show of hands indicated that many of the children have a relative who suffers from asthma or cancer, and some of the students have asthma themselves. (The San Francisco Chronicle covered the bus tour. [Click here to read the story.](#))

Fr. McChesney participated in the blessing of the truck fleet because he wanted the truck drivers to know that the Church is with them in their struggles. "The truckers told me that through their jobs they seek lives of dignity for themselves and the families they support. I responded that God accompanies them in their labors, and that their work unites them with the ongoing work of the Creator," said Fr. McChesney. "A lot of the drivers told me they feel badly because they work up to 14 hours a day and are unable to spend as much time at church as they would like. So we felt it was important to bring the church to them in their workplace."

Many drivers asked Fr. McChesney to bless them and their trucks with holy water. Several Protestant ministers offered "laying on the hands" as they prayed for the drivers' health and safety. The clergy members gave the drivers prayer cards with green ribbons to symbolize a clean and safe working environment and community. Many drivers wore the gifts around their necks. Others hung them from their rearview mirrors as a reminder of the spiritual support they received.

"It made me feel good to see that the spiritual people are on our side," said Cliff Coleman, a 62 year old Port driver. "I think it was great they came to the Port."

After visiting with hundreds of Port drivers, the clergy members committed to continue to assist the drivers in their efforts to win a sustainable Clean Trucks Program at the Port of Oakland.

Coalition Members Voice Their Views to Port Commissioners

The Solution: Employee Model and Local Hire



Members of the Coalition for Clean & Safe Ports (CCSP) showed up in full force at the May 6 Port Commission meeting to express their concerns about the Port's failure to solve the problems of: 1) poor air quality associated with Port trucking; 2) sub-standard Port trucking jobs; and 3) the lack of good Port job opportunities for local residents. The Coalition includes more than 75 organizations. In a show of strength reflecting the Coalition's wide spread support throughout the community, representatives from more than a dozen environmental, health, environmental justice and community organizations including Natural Resources Defense Council, West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project, Oakland ACORN, Communities for a Better Environment, Asian Pacific Environmental Network, Center for Environmental Health, Alameda County Public Health Department, West Oakland Neighbors, Breathe California, WorkSafe, Sierra Club, East Bay Alliance for Sustainable Economy, and Change To Win took the opportunity to speak during the public comment section of the Port Commission meeting.

The speakers consistently delivered the message that poor air quality at the Port is directly linked to inordinately high incidences of asthma and cancer in Oakland and that the only way to solve this problem is to: 1) institute a system in which drivers become employees of the trucking companies and the industry takes responsibility for getting the truck fleet to meet new air quality standards; and 2) create a local hire program which will benefit residents most impacted by Port activity while decreasing the number of miles trucks travel thereby reducing the amount of air pollution as well.

Leading the delegation was Diane Bailey, Senior Scientist, Natural Resources Defense Council and Coalition Steering Committee member. "There is no doubt there is a strong link between protecting the health of local residents and drivers and the employment status of Port truck drivers," said Bailey. "The only way that we will succeed in our efforts to clean the air and lower the burden of asthma and cancer risk on the community is to lift the burden of meeting environmental standards from falling on the backs of low-paid 'independent' owner/operators, who cannot afford to buy clean trucks, and instead make the industry responsible by employing the drivers."

Political Support Has Snowball Effect



In a recent letter to Oakland Port Commission President Anthony Batarse, **Oakland City Council President Ignacio De La Fuente** voiced his strong support for a CCSP proposal that port truck drivers become employees of port trucking companies. De La Fuente stated, "The 'concession model' not only provides important environmental benefits to the Port and the community, but it also gives the Port measures of accountability and control that are likely to lead to improvements in efficiency and security."

The green business model has gained federal and state support as well - from some of the Democratic Party's most influential leaders. Writing in support of the recent Clean Trucks Program adopted by the LA Harbor Commission, **House Speaker Nancy Pelosi** urged the Federal Maritime Commission to consider the broader effects on public health and safety of port operations. According to Pelosi, "the program will reduce air pollution, improving public health locally - where workers and residents suffer from disproportionately higher rates of asthma and cancer - as well as regionally. The program will also increase the productivity of port trucking, reduce congestion, and strengthen port security and safety while creating good middle-income jobs."

These elected leaders join a growing list of supporters of the Coalition for Clean & Safe Ports campaign including **Senator Barack Obama, Senator Hillary Clinton, Senator Barbara Boxer, Assemblymembers Sandré Swanson, Loni Hancock** and others.

Rising Diesel Prices Fuels Wildcat Strike at Port



The rising cost of fuel was the straw that broke the camel's back for hundreds of truck drivers who staged a wildcat strike earlier this month that shut down the Port of Oakland for several days. Drivers who make as little as \$8 an hour say that diesel fuel costing more than \$4.50 a gallon is too much to bear on top of all the other expenses they must pay to own and operate their trucks as "independent contractors." The Port eventually obtained a restraining order that diminished further calls for ongoing protests.

"The drivers are obviously at their wits' end," said Doug Bloch, Director of the Coalition for Clean & Safe Ports. "The skyrocketing diesel prices are contributing to an already impossible situation and the companies are failing to address the issue."

On low wages, it will be impossible for undercapitalized Port drivers to replace or upgrade their trucks to meet new clean air regulations. Some experts suggest without fundamental reform, more labor unrest could occur, which often drives away the experienced truckers needed to keep goods moving through the Port.

The Coalition for Clean & Safe Ports was not involved in the planning or execution of the strike. But partner organizations believe the recent wildcat strike underscores the need for a long-term solution that will lead to labor stability and cleaner air. The Coalition continues to call for a comprehensive Clean Trucks Program that meets labor, community and environmental standards. "Until sustainable reforms are instituted, we should be prepared for continued pandemonium at the Port," said Bloch.