



MEDIA ADVISORY & DATEBOOK ITEM FOR: Wed. Nov. 19, 2008
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Environmental-Labor Coalition to Rally for Quick Port Air Clean-up
Community urges a comprehensive policy that forces the industry to clean up its act and clean up the air

While Oakland Port officials discuss piece-meal efforts to meet minimum clean-air standards set by the state, environmentalists, port drivers, public health advocates, clergy and others will stage a protest to urge the Port of Oakland to take bold action on a sweeping policy to reduce the truck pollution that contributes to a soaring asthma rate that impacts one in five West Oakland children.

What: Rally in Support of a Clean Trucks Program like L.A's at the Oakland Port
When: Wednesday, November 19 at 2:30pm
Prior to the special Oakland Port Commission Meeting at 3:30pm
Where: Oakland Port Commission Building
530 Water Street (between Clay & Washington), Oakland
Visuals: Protesting environmentalists, port truck drivers, clergy, community leaders, public health advocates and union members.

The Oakland Port Commission scheduled a special meeting this Wednesday to hear from State and local officials about efforts to meet new State clean air standards through the Port Truck Retrofit and Replacement Program. The standards issued by the California Air Resources Board (CARB), that require old, diesel polluting port trucks to be replaced or retrofitted with filters will go into effect in 2010. CARB and the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) created a grant program with funding from the Port that may finance part of the cost of the truck replacements or retrofits. But in the absence of the Port enacting a comprehensive Clean Trucks Program, the Port is creating a financial crisis forcing low-income truck drivers into debt to pay the rest of the cost of the truck retrofits and replacements.

In contrast to the band-aid Oakland approach, the Port of Los Angeles successfully launched a sustainable program that bans old, dirty diesel rigs from the Port; requires the multi-billion dollar shippers and trucking companies to take responsibility for a clean fleet by legitimately employing their workers; and offers powerful incentives to jump start a new clean-technology market. Since the start date, deadly diesel emissions were significantly reduced overnight.

In July, with L.A. Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa at his side, Mayor Ron Dellums joined thousands of Coalition for Clean & Safe Ports members at a downtown rally and pledged that Oakland will be the next city to enact a comprehensive Clean Trucks Program. Support for this green-growth model extends from local political establishment to President-elect Barack Obama, including Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, Senators Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein, and the entire California Democratic Congressional delegation.

In the absence of a comprehensive program, on Wednesday the Oakland Port will consider backing a scheme to require port drivers instead of profitable companies to replace or retrofit filters. The cost of a retrofit filter is estimated at \$15,000 - \$28,000. With a maximum grant available of only \$15,000, most port drivers will have to pay thousands of dollars out pocket to install one. If a driver applies for a new replacement truck grant, he may receive up to \$50,000. But a new truck costs over \$100,000. How does a port driver making about \$30,000 a year, come up with another \$50,000 especially during this time of economic crisis and tight credit? Taxpayers will subsidize some of the cost, but many experts expect these low-paid independent contractors who face a thousand-fold elevated cancer risk to leave the industry entirely, or be forced into bankruptcy.

The Oakland Port has come under criticism from the community for failing to take responsible action to address the public health crisis. With two years of study and the L.A. model as an example, the Coalition for Clean & Safe Ports believes there is no excuse for baby steps: The Port of Oakland hired a consulting firm to study Port trucking problems and to report on its findings and proposed solutions in December. On Wednesday, Coalition partners will urge *the Port to bring a comprehensive sustainable Clean Trucks Program to a vote in January.*

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