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New Study Reveals Alarming High Cost of Oakland Port Truck Diesel Pollution and the Broken Trucking System *More than \$153 million drained from the economy each year*

(Oakland, CA) A new study released today by the Pacific Institute and the East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy puts a \$153 million a year price tag on the cost of premature death, asthma, increased cancer risk, and other diseases due to Oakland Port truck diesel pollution. This report analyzes, for the first time data on Port diesel truck pollution to estimate the economic and public costs born by residents and workers in Oakland. The report also offers qualitative evidence of other health impacts from port truck activity that spill into residential communities, and the health hazards faced by port truck drivers. Residents and truck drivers pay the price with their health, and taxpayers, residents, and truck drivers pay the healthcare costs.

“Community residents and workers know all too well the real costs of Port trucking operations: they feel it in effects on their health, on their safety, on their neighborhoods,” said Swati Prakash, Senior Research Associate at the Pacific Institute’s Community Strategies for Sustainability and Justice Program and coauthor of the new report. “Our analysis begins to put a quantifiable price tag on these costs that are paid for by the public for this part of the freight transportation industry, and in doing so, give communities concrete evidence to work with in advocating for improvements.”

The key findings in *Taking a Toll: The high cost of health, environmental, and worker impacts of the Oakland Port trucking system* (www.workingeastbay.org/takingatoll) authored by Jennifer Lin, Research Director, East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy and Swati Prakash, Senior Research Associate, Pacific Institute, include:

- Port truck diesel emissions pollute surrounding neighborhoods and contribute to premature death, asthma, increased cancer risk, and other diseases amounting to at least **\$153 million annually in the Bay Area.**
- Additional costs to residential neighborhoods include noise and vibration, reduced pedestrian visibility, lower neighborhood walkability, and increased environmental stress.
- **Each year taxpayers pay \$4.5 million** to underwrite emergency or public healthcare coverage for Port truck drivers, who primarily work as non-employees (independent contractors) and lack employer-based health insurance for themselves and their families.
- Other costs of Port operations are borne by port truck drivers who face unhealthy working conditions and a lack of workers’ compensation when they are injured at work.

One in five West Oakland children have asthma and there is a thousand-fold elevated cancer risks among truck drivers.

“It’s unacceptable to allow \$153 million a year to be drained out of our regional economy -- especially for costs that are largely preventable,” said Jennifer Lin, Research Director, EBASE. “For \$153 million dollars, we could provide health care to 75,000 uninsured children a year.”

For Athena Applon, a West Oakland resident for 26 years, the devastating hardship Port truck diesel pollution wreaks on families hits home. “At least 20 of my relatives have asthma. Five of them use an electric asthma machine, and my mother has to have a two-foot-tall oxygen tank nearby at all times,” said Applon. “Recently, I was diagnosed with asthma too.”

Port truck drivers also pay a high price for the dysfunctional Port trucking system. Most Port truck drivers make \$8 to \$10 an hour after expenses and cannot afford health insurance.

“I have liver disease, and I am now on a waiting list for a liver transplant,” said Muhammad Asif, who has been driving a truck at the Port of Oakland since 2002. At the time of the diagnosis, Asif did not have health insurance. Making less than \$5 an hour, he was eligible for Medi-Cal. “Diesel fumes make me drowsy when I am taking my medication. My doctor told me to stop driving at the Port. Now, I don’t know how I am going to make a living and support my family.”

The release of *Taking a Toll* comes amid intense pressure on the Port from East Bay residents, Port truck drivers, public health professionals, environmental advocates, and community leaders to reform the Port trucking system. The port has been studying the problem for two years, but currently has no plan to come into compliance with the new State clean truck standards scheduled to go into effect January 2010 that impacted communities desperately need.

Taking A Toll recommends the Port of Oakland act quickly to:

- **Create a uniform and comprehensive set of standards covering environmental impacts, neighborhood impacts, and working conditions for any company that does business with the Port of Oakland.**
- **Require and enforce adherence to these standards among port trucking companies by shifting port trucking to a concession model with employee status.**

The Pacific Institute is an Oakland-based independent non-profit that works to create a healthier planet and sustainable communities. The East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy (EBASE) advances economic and social justice by building power and raising standards for working families.