

For Immediate Release: Wednesday March 10, 2010

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**Statement from Amy Goldsmith,
executive director of the New Jersey
Environmental Federation on behalf of
the Coalition for Healthy Ports**

Today the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey announced a truck ban effective January 1st, 2011. The first phase of the ban will remove all pre-1994 trucks - the oldest and most polluting diesel rigs – from our region’s ports. The following is a statement by Amy Goldsmith, as Chair of the Coalition for Healthy Ports and Executive Director of the New Jersey Environmental Federation. The Coalition is a partnership of nearly two dozen environmental, public health, labor, faith-based and community organizations working to reverse the unintended, deadly consequences of a failed, deregulated port trucking economy.

“We welcome the initial step the Port Authority is taking to reduce truck emissions, but it will take far greater strides to achieve and sustain clean air.

“Our crumbling port trucking system accounts for a significant amount of the air pollution choking our region, endangers children by contributing to asthma and other serious illnesses, and sentences more than 7,000 port truck drivers to lives of peril and poverty. The antiquated system also chokes business growth and threatens the Port Authority’s desired expansion at our vital, regional economic engines.

“While we look forward to next year’s official retirement of dirty trucks built before 1994, it will account for less than 10 percent of the total port trucking fleet – leaving thousands of toxic spewing diesel trucks on the road.

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“Under the current plan individual truck drivers, precariously employed under the guise of ‘independent contractor’ by their companies will be required to assume massive debt to purchase cleaner trucks in order to continue working at the port. These individual loans, subject to qualification and good credit, will be subsidized by more than \$28 million in grants and loans funded by taxpayer dollars.

“Experiences from other ports around the country provide real world examples for the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey to consider. Earlier this year in Oakland, a publically funded grant program established to help drivers upgrade and purchase new trucks ran out of money, leaving officials scrambling for more state and federal funds as an estimated 1,000 truckers face unemployment. In Long Beach, continuous news reports profile drivers whose already low incomes have been ‘trimmed to new lows’ in order to meet payments on clean vehicles, with long-time haulers like Rafael Rivera showing a \$138 check after a week’s worth of hauling.

“This not a model to replicate, nor is it a cause for clean-air celebration. That is why we strongly advocate for a plan that requires the capitalized shipping and trucking industry to take responsibility for cleaner commerce through company-owned fleets, driven by employees instead of so-called independent contractors.

“The only solution to the problem of bad jobs and dirty air at our nation’s ports is the Clean Truck Program enacted in 2008 by the Port of Los Angeles which provided economic incentives for trucking companies to purchase clean fleets. Unfortunately the American Trucking Association sued to stop this highly successful program, simultaneously obstructing similar comprehensive efforts in New York and New Jersey.

“The Coalition for Healthy Ports will continue to advocate for a sustainable Clean Truck Program. We join the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey in its call on Congress to update outdated law to ensure ports around the country have the clear authority to implement 21st Century policies that will protect the environment and public health, reduce security risks and create American middle-class jobs.”

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