



For Immediate Release: Friday, April 3, 2008
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Local Coalition of Environmental, Public Health, and Worker Advocates Teams Up with Los Angeles Community Leader to Push for Clean Port Truck Policy on April 4 at NJEF Conference in Newark

Coalition for Healthy Ports to investigate port drivers' and community's exposure to diesel exhaust April 7 – 9 to continue to urge NY-NJ Ports, political leaders to take action to replace broken port trucking system with a sustainable 21st century business model

NEWARK – On Saturday April 4 the Coalition for Healthy Ports, a diverse labor-environmental alliance in New Jersey, is hosting a key leader from Southern California who helped spearhead a landmark Port of Los Angeles policy solution to create good, green blue-collar jobs and dramatically reduce diesel truck pollution caused by goods movement.

Patricia Castellanos, chair of the Coalition for Clean & Safe Ports, will help lead tomorrow's **Grow Green, Grow Smart at New Jersey Ports** plenary at the New Jersey Environmental Federation's "Clean Green and Working" conference at Rutgers University School of Law. Amy Goldsmith, the chair of the Coalition for Healthy Ports, will moderate the panel to exchange ideas and strategies to push the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey to deliver a Los Angeles Clean Trucks Program-style solution in our region. Governor Jon Corzine will keynote the conference.

Castellanos' visit coincides with the Coalition for Healthy Port's plans to investigate reductions in port drivers' exposure to toxic diesel exhaust when researchers from the Clean Air Task Force this week test a Jersey City hauler's diesel-spewing rig equipped with special filters.

"Just like Los Angeles, Newark residents suffer from the environmental burden, but receive none of the economic benefits of having a port in their backyard," said Goldsmith, who also is director of the New Jersey Environmental Federation and the Clean Water Fund. "It's time for officials to take action because the health impacts from diesel soot in our state will soon have an annual cost of approximately \$4.8 billion, and our ports are a major source of this pollution."

Each day trucks make nearly 10,000 trips through port-adjacent neighborhoods and surrounding highways, spewing diesel pollution on residents. Port trucks are a contributing factor to a one-in-four asthma rate among school age children in Newark; double the national and state average.

Dr. David Bensman of the School of Management and Labor Relations at Rutgers recently found that among the approximately 7,000 port truck drivers who deliver and pick up containers at the ports of New York and New Jersey daily, nearly three-quarters are misclassified as "independent contractors."

This means their employers require the drivers to own the primary tool of the trade – the truck – with no say in negotiated haul rates. Not surprisingly, port drivers net \$28,000 per year after expenses, fuel and insurance, and struggle to afford even the most routine repairs and upgrades, and lack

health insurance or pension benefits. In hourly terms, independent contractors earn a shade less than \$10 per hour.

As a result, the Rutgers study found, the average port trucker drives a vehicle that is 11 years old. Diesel engines of this vintage pollute at least ten times more than modern ones, consume more fuel, cost more to maintain, and require frequent repairs. The most dangerous element of diesel engine emissions is the particle of 2.5 microns or less in diameter. These fine particles are coated with over 40 dangerous substances that cause asthma, lung cancer, heart disease and respiratory illness. Health studies indicate that the drivers' exposure to vehicle exhaust result in elevated mortality rates.

"If anyone knows how broken the port trucking system is, how diesel pollution harms us, our families, the community, it's the drivers," said Kenel Hyppolite. The Haitian-American immigrant – the volunteer in next week's diesel exhaust monitoring project --- has hauled cargo professionally for eight years but earns a paycheck too small to fix his old, non-EPA compliant rig or to permanently outfit his rig with the retrofit being used for the one-week research project. "My industry will only bring more dirty air and dead-end jobs unless the companies are required to take responsibility for clean trucks and workers like me."

The Coalition for Healthy Ports is pushing for officials here to adopt a comprehensive clean-air plan modeled after a landmark Port of Los Angeles policy developed under the leadership of Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa. The LA "Clean Trucks Program" has been lauded by economists and environmentalists alike, as the green-growth initiative launched on Oct 1 will reduce emissions from port trucking by 80%, deliver over \$5 billion to the regional economy, and drastically reduce security risks through key enforcement provisions that require a polluting industry to take responsibility for clean vehicles and its workforce. Villaraigosa has been widely praised in the press by clean-air and labor advocates for rejecting band-aid fixes that will fail to sustain clean-up or generate middle-class jobs.

Last fall, in a public forum on the green port policy that included LA officials and Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-NY), Port Authority Executive Director Chris Ward acknowledged that a clean-trucks program, which would only add a nickel to the cost of a pair of sneakers, is "inevitable."

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About the Coalition for Healthy Ports

The Coalition for Healthy Ports is the sister organization of the Coalition for Clean & Safe Ports in LA, Oakland, and Seattle (www.cleanandsafeports.org) and is a broad coalition of environmental, labor, faith, community, environmental justice, and business organizations that seek to create sustainable ports in New York and New Jersey. The Coalition is committed to a lasting solution to clean the air and stimulate good, middle-class jobs for surrounding port communities, and includes the following organizations: Environmental Research Foundation (Rachel.org); Environment NJ; Future City, Inc.; Garden State Alliance for a New Economy (GANE); GreenFaith; Haiti Solidarity Network of the North East (HSNNE); International Brotherhood of Teamsters; ILA Local 1588; Ironbound Community Corporation; Jubilee Immigrants' Rights Task Force; NJ Environmental Federation; NJ Environmental Justice Alliance; NJ Sierra Club; NJ Work Environment Council; Clean Water Fund; United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1360; United Nations Association USA, NJ Division; Urban Environmental Institute; Change to Win