

Testimony of Roy Wilson
Vice Chairman of the South Coast Air Quality Management District
In Support of S.1499
Marine Vessel Emissions Reduction Act of 2007

Presented to the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee
August 9, 2007
San Pedro, California

Good morning. My name is Roy Wilson.

I am here today in my capacity as Vice Chairman of the South Coast Air Quality Management District, and I also serve as a member of the Board of Supervisors of Riverside County. The South Coast AQMD is the agency with the job to achieve federal and state clean air standards in the South Coast Air Basin, a region that is home to over 16 million people.

We have made great progress in reducing air pollution in recent decades, but our Basin still has the dirtiest air in the country. The California Air Resources Board estimates that over 5,400 people die prematurely *every year* in this region due to harm from particulate pollution.

Other documented health impacts include permanent injury to children's lung function, increased rates of asthma & heart disease, and increased cancer risks.

On behalf of the South Coast Air District, I want to commend you, Madame Chair, for your leadership in recognizing a critical public health problem and introducing S-1499.

This region simply cannot achieve clean air standards as mandated by federal law unless oceangoing vessels such as container ships switch to cleaner fuels and cleaner engine technologies, as your bill would require.

Here's why your bill is so critical:

In recent decades, the AQMD has adopted the most stringent emission standards in the country for stationary sources such as refineries, factories and power plants, as well as for every other source we could address, from barbeque lighter fluids to residential water heaters to household paints.

Yet we still fall short of attainment. In order to meet federal air quality standards, emissions of sulfur oxides must be cut by over half by 2014. In addition, nitrogen oxides must be cut by over 70 percent by 2023.

Given this challenge, it is shocking to consider that just upwind of our region, marine vessels operate enormous engines (some over three stories high) without *any* emission controls to speak of. These vessels also burn some of the dirtiest fuel in the world —

literally the bottom of the barrel, left after the refining process. This sludge-like fuel has a sulfur content averaging 27,000 parts per million, *orders of magnitude* beyond the sulfur content of fuels used on land. Due to prevailing winds, emissions from this fuel contribute to health risks all the way to inland counties.

To meet federal PM standards, the sulfur content of marine fuels must be cut by over 95 percent, as your bill calls for. This is needed because the burning of marine fuels is the single largest source of sulfur oxide emissions in this region, accounting for approximately one-half of all such pollution.

Oceangoing vessels are also on track to become the third largest source of NOx emissions by 2014, and the *single largest* source by 2023. Reducing marine vessel NOx emissions is critical to our attainment goals.

Unfortunately, despite the clear harm to public health, the federal government has not provided any real assistance in controlling these massive pollution sources. EPA rules are weak and do not even touch the source of over 85% of marine emissions — foreign flag vessels in U.S. waters. In this federal vacuum, state and local governments have sought to act. San Pedro Bay ports have stated they will use their authority as landlords to impose environmental conditions in terminal leases, and the California Air Resources Board has adopted a rule limiting emissions from small secondary engines on vessels. But there are challenges for state and local governments seeking to control these international sources, and federal leadership will be vital to full attainment of clean air goals.

Some stakeholders have shown great leadership. MAERSK, the world's largest shipping company, recently began to voluntarily use lower sulfur fuels in its engines near the California coast. This responsible action showed that marine pollution can be controlled, and that it can be done while satisfying business needs. There are many other effective technologies available to comply with your bill's safeguards.

Your bill will create a level playing field for local businesses and those like MAERSK who take actions needed to maintain public health. Your bill will assist port cities around the country to achieve healthful air quality, and will prevent competitive disadvantages for ports that do so. And this bill will allow for economic growth in an environmentally responsible manner.

On behalf of the AQMD and the millions of persons suffering from air pollution, we thank you for introducing this landmark legislation, and we offer whatever assistance we can provide to see it adopted.

Thank you.

#