

August 9, 2007

Comments of John G. Miller, M.D. FACEP for Hearing on "Marine Vessel Emission Reduction Act of 2007"

Good Morning. I am Dr John G. Miller, an Emergency Physician. I live here in the Diesel Death Zone in San Pedro. I have practiced in various Emergency Departments in the South Coast Air Basin for more than 30 years. I am certified by the American Board of Emergency Medicine and I am a Lifetime Fellow of the American College of Emergency Physicians. I was originally trained in Radiation Oncology at USC Medical Center. (Medical School-Baylor College of Medicine, Houston TX, Prof. Societies: Society of Orange County Emergency Physicians, Society for Scientific Exploration, Board of Directors: Coalition for a Safe Environment, Wilmington, CA. I was the only medical doctor on Mayor Hahn's *No Net Increase Task Force*).

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

I am speaking in support of this bill. I will give a clinician's perspective on why it should be enacted. The bill addresses the ship pollution problem in a way that is workable and provides a level playing field for all West Coast ports and shippers.

The bill addresses a serious problem we have here in Southern California. The twin ports (LA and Long Beach) have been identified as the single largest unregulated source of air pollution in the South Coast Air Basin. Port related activity (ships, trucks, trains and cargo handling equipment) contributes a total of roughly 25% of the mass of air pollutants in the South Coast Air Basin. Angelenos breathe the most unhealthy air in America. In a study done by the Port of Los Angeles, ship operations were shown to contribute 55% of port related air pollution. Thus ships are the largest source of port related air pollution. (From: Port Wide Baseline Air Emissions Inventory, Final Draft, page 26, June 2004, Port of Los Angeles, Starcrest Consulting Group)

Large foreign owned or flagged ships have had a free ride. They are allowed to use our air as their toxic dumping site. Yet local land based businesses have been heavily regulated to prevent this. International standards for pollution from ship engines, written mostly by the shipping industry, are so lax as to be meaningless.

Welcome to the "Diesel Death Zone". As demonstrated in the MATES II study, (Multiple Air Toxics Exposure Study II, March 2000, [www.aqmd.gov](http://www.aqmd.gov)) we have a broad swath of severe air pollution that extends from the ports inland across the Air Basin that adversely affects the lives and health of over 14 million citizens.). This area has come to be known as the Diesel Death Zone. (I show the map of cancer risks due to air pollution from MATES II. Darkest areas-near



the ports- show risks of cancer from breathing air of 5000 to 6000 cases per million (I show the map of cancer risks due to air pollution from MATES II. Darkest areas-near the ports- show risks of cancer from breathing air of 5000 to 6000 cases per million population. Federal Standard for this risk from one project should be less than 1 per million population, from all sources in an area should be less than 300 cases per million population.)

Attachments A: "Cancer Risks from Breathing Air-Mates II" a map of our region showing risk stratified areas. This was done by the Sierra Club from data supporting figure 5-3a page 5-10 in MATES II . This black and white figure (5-3a) is also attached but this figure merely shows the high risk areas as large black spots due to printer inadequacy. Note that risks of up to 5,800 cases per million are demonstrated.

Attachment B: "Heart Disease Deaths -1996 Communities in Los Angeles County" (Source L.A. County Dept of Health Services). This map illustrates areas with highest numbers of heart disease deaths in darker colors. It looks very similar to the Cancer risks map I just showed. I assert that some of these heart disease deaths are being caused by air pollution from the ports.

This ugly swath disproportionately affects lower income communities and people of color in places such as Wilmington, Compton ,Carson, South Central and East L.A. This map provides clear documentation of a serious environmental justice issue.

The medical literature on the effects of air pollution on human health is vast and growing. Many important studies were done at USC and UCLA Schools of Medicine. It would take longer than my 5 minutes to read through even a partial list of all the adverse effects related to diesel air pollution. Cancer, heart attacks, strokes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and asthma are major killers (Attachment C: "Health Effects of Diesel Exhaust Air Pollution", August 28, 2003, Port of Los Angeles Port Community Advisory Committee Air Quality Group, with references from the medical/scientific literature attached). These killers are related to air pollution in a largely simple, linear fashion with no known lower threshold of safe exposure. More pollution means more disease, death, and cost to our society. (Professor Avol will cover some children's health effects in his testimony).

Costs:

Industry spokespersons have asserted that the costs of this are "unknown and unknowable". However it is possible to estimate societal costs due to ship related air pollution. The Union of Concerned Scientists estimated that the cost of "Health Incidences from diesel exhaust in 2004 in the South Coast" was \$ 10.2 Billion ! This was for only the one year they studied. (Source: Sick of Soot, Reducing the Health Impacts of Diesel Pollution in California , Union of Concerned Scientists, June 2004. available at [www.ucsusa.org](http://www.ucsusa.org)) Knowing that the Ports contribute 25% of the total pollution causing this, we get the Ports total share of the cost as