

Testimony of Barry R. Wallerstein, D. Env.
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In Support of S.1499 - *Marine Vessel Emissions Reduction Act of 2007*
Presented to the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee
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Good morning. My name is Dr. Barry Wallerstein, Executive Officer of the South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD). The AQMD is tasked with achieving federal clean air standards in the greater Los Angeles area, a region with over 16 million residents including the urban portions of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino Counties.

On behalf of the AQMD, I want to commend you, Madame Chair, for your leadership in recognizing a serious national public health problem and introducing S. 1499 to address it. This legislation quite simply will save lives. It is feasible and cost effective . . . and the time to act is now.

Necessity. The legislation is necessary because marine vessels are the largest uncontrolled source of air pollution in many areas of the country, causing at least 2,000 to 5,000 premature deaths every year across the U.S.

Marine vessels burn fuel with sulfur content 1,800 times higher than allowed for on-road and off-road sources in the U.S. As a result, vessels create 70 percent of sulfur oxides emissions in the South Coast region. We cannot attain the ambient standard for particulates by the year 2014 federal deadline unless these emissions are cut by over 90%.

Oceangoing vessels are also on track to become the single largest source of nitrogen oxides in our region, emitting more than all refineries and power plants combined. We cannot attain the national ozone standard unless those emissions are substantially cut.

Moreover, particulates emitted by marine vessels create significant cancer risks for millions of people.

Controlling these emissions, as S. 1499 would, will prevent over 700 premature deaths annually in the South Coast region, and will substantially reduce the thousands of deaths occurring nationwide. It will also reduce asthma and other respiratory diseases, as well as acid rain and regional haze.

Feasibility. The emission reductions required by S. 1499 are feasible. In fact, some vessel operators are already using cleaner fuels. Maersk, the largest container line in the world, is currently switching to low sulfur fuels in all ships approaching California ports. The United States government recognized the feasibility and need for such actions when it proposed that the International Maritime Organization (IMO) require 1,000 ppm sulfur fuel beginning in 2011, a sulfur limit and deadline that is consistent with S. 1499. Key shipping industry representatives support the U.S. proposal.

Cost. The cost to implement the bill is reasonable. Although low sulfur fuels are more expensive, the added shipping costs would be relatively low because clean fuels would only be required for a relatively small portion of each voyage.

The fuel cost would amount to an increase in per-container shipping costs of only one-fifth to one-half of *one percent*. From the standpoint of a consumer, the cost of a 60-inch plasma television would rise due to fuel costs by only 43 to 96 cents. The cost for a pair of shoes would go up by one-fifth to two-fifths of *one penny*.

The thousands of lives that would be saved by these moderate costs make this bill a true environmental bargain.

Wait for IMO? You may hear the suggestion that the U.S. should wait for IMO to adopt standards. You should reject this idea for two key reasons:

- First, there is no assurance that IMO will adopt standards sufficient for this country. Indeed, IMO has never adopted standards even approaching U.S. needs. It is notable that, at least since 2003, EPA has cited its desire to work through IMO as a reason to delay deciding whether EPA can and should regulate foreign flag vessels (which are responsible for 90% of vessel emissions). After years of such delay, we still don't have effective IMO standards, or EPA rules.
- Second, S. 1499 is entirely consistent with the U.S. proposal to IMO. Moving ahead with this bill should help spur IMO to act, and to do so in a manner that satisfies U.S. needs. S. 1499 will place the U.S. in a clear position of leadership.

Support. In closing, there is a growing coalition of support for S. 1499. The Port and City of Long Beach and the Port and City of Los Angeles support the bill. They want their ports to grow, and they know that there is not conflict between clean air and growth; rather, clean air is a critical component of the ports' economic development. The *National Association of Clean Air Agencies* is also in support, as are individual air agencies from states such as California, New York, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Montana, Maryland, Colorado, Pennsylvania, Oregon, and Washington State.

We thank you again Madame Chair for introducing this landmark legislation and we offer our continued assistance. We also thank the Committee members for their consideration of this important national issue.