

U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee  
“Hearing to Examine Port Pollution  
and the Need for Additional Controls on Large Ships”

*Testimony for Congresswoman Hilda Solis, as prepared for delivery:*

“Good morning Chairwoman Boxer. Thank you for inviting me to testify today regarding the difficulties facing our communities as a result of pollution from marine vessels.

“The California Air Resources Board (CARB) estimates that each year there are 5,400 premature deaths, 2,400 hospitalizations, 140,000 cases of asthma, and 980,000 lost days of work as a result of poor air quality. Marine vessels and locomotives are the largest unregulated source, emitting more nitrogen oxides than all of the refineries, power plants and 350 other largest stationary sources in the South Coast Air Basin combined.

“Many of the communities on the front lines of this pollution are environmental justice communities, which are the least equipped to deal with the cumulative impacts of environmental contamination. In the communities I represent in East Los Angeles and the San Gabriel Valley, as in others across the country, poor environmental conditions are not equitably distributed.

“According to the EPA, 43 enforcement actions were taken against 39 facilities in Los Angeles County between October, 2005 and May, 2007. Nine-two percent of people living within a three mile radius of these facilities are minority and 51% live below the poverty level.

“Environmental conditions significantly impact the quality of life and the health of our families. According to a recent study by the California Air Resources Board, persons residing near railyards face an increased cancer risk associated with increased diesel emissions from expanding goods movement. The study found that residents in Commerce, California, near one Union Pacific and three BNSF yards, are 70% to 140% more likely to contract cancer from diesel soot than people in other parts of Los Angeles. Other communities near railyards, such as those in Wilmington and Riverside County, are 11% to 26% more likely to contract cancer.

“At the same time that the ports and railyards negatively impact the health of our communities, they also play a large and growing role in our economy. The ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach are the 5<sup>th</sup> largest in the world and the nation’s busiest. 43% of goods that come into the U.S. enter through these ports. The amount of cargo handled by the ports is expected to almost triple in the next 15 years. The value of goods traveling through these ports will increase by more than \$400 billion in the next 15 years.

“Together we can and must ensure that as our economy grows our public health improves, workers have a safer environment, and costs associated with impacts of pollution on public health are reduced. As we grow our ports, we must grow them green. This includes the vessels.

“Unfortunately, the Federal government has failed to take action to protect public health. A proposal by the EPA released in April, 2007, would not control emissions from marine vessels such as containerships and tankers. It also fails to limit the sulfur content of fuels used in oceangoing ships, the single largest source of sulfur oxides in the South Coast Air Basin.

“I also found this proposed rule troubling because of its lack of attention to environmental justice. Despite a recent announcement from the EPA that it will “ensure that the Agency’s environmental justice considerations are accurately described to the public when proposed and final regulations are published after January 2007,” this proposal did not mention environmental justice once in its 800 pages.

“That is why I am proud to be the lead sponsor in the U.S. House of Representatives of H.R. 2548, the Marine Vessel Emissions Reduction Act of 2007. H.R. 2548 will reduce emissions from marine vessels at our nation's ports, protecting our communities and other from unnecessary public health risks. I am pleased that you, along with introduced Sen. Feinstein, have introduced the Senate companion. Together, with our Air Quality Management District, our cities, our Mayors, the Metropolitan Transit Authority, and our communities we can not only grow our ports – but grow them green.

“Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to continuing to work with you to protect the health and welfare of all of our communities.”

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