MAYOR BOB FOSTER

CITY OF LONG BEACH

Testimony presented
to the
United States Senate
Committee on Environment and Public Works
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Good morning.

Senator Boxer, Congresswoman Solis, Supervisor Wilson and Director Nichols,
I join my colleague from Los Angeles in welcoming you to the San Pedro Ports.

Senator Boxer, thank you for your leadership on tackling port pollution. When we first spoke about these issues just after my election last year, you knew well the air quality challenges facing Long Beach and all of California and asked what you could do to help. Your introduction of The Marine Vessel Emissions Reduction Act is a significant effort to bring another solution to the air quality challenge to the table. I want to thank you for your leadership on this front.

We all know that these two ports are the undisputed gateway to the United States. The containers that cross these docks on their way to destinations across America carry more than 45% of our country's imported consumer goods. And the projections for the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles show a near tripling of cargo in the next decade.

Goods movement is truly a national issue – but the pollution caused by the attendant trucks, ships and locomotives is felt acutely in neighborhoods along California's freeways and next to our rail yards.

Quite frankly, the level of growth contemplated is unsustainable without environmental enhancements that make these ports operate cleaner than they are today, despite any increase in volume.

As I have said many times before: We can no longer have kids in Long Beach contract asthma so someone in Kansas can buy a cheaper TV.

333 WEST OCEAN BOULEVARD, LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA 90802
TELEPHONE 562-570-6801 FAX 562-570-6538 MAYOR@LONGBEACH.GOV

It is going to take the collective energies of our cities, our ports, our commercial interests, the State of California and the federal government to be successful at this environmental effort.

Here at the local level, our two ports have launched the Clean Air Action Plan (CAAP), a landmark effort to reduce emissions by at least 45% within the next 5 years.

Here's just one immediate example of the need for this broad collaboration I mentioned: Even with voluntary commercial participation in port-sponsored programs that call for reduced off-shore speeds, ocean-going vessels continue to be one of the largest contributors to air pollution in Southern California. These vessels generate 59% of diesel particulate matter (DPM) and 90 percent of the sulfur oxide (SOx) in the South Coast Air Basin.

Jurisdiction on regulating those vessels, however, falls outside the realm of the ports or either of our cities.

In closing, I believe that we have just one chance to do this right – and I truly believe that opportunity is before us now.

The country looks to California for environmental leadership and the entire world is watching closely to see where we take them in this effort.

Senator Boxer, thank you again for your keen focus and willingness to tackle these challenges.

Thank you for the opportunity to present before the committee and I look forward to building on this dialogue in the months ahead.

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