Statement of Joel T. Chaisson

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Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works

"Legislative Hearing on the Marine Vessel Emissions Reduction Act of 2007", S. 1499

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Thank you, Madam Chairwoman Boxer, Ranking Member Inhofe, and Senator Vitter and other Members of the Committee for the opportunity to testify today. I am Joel Chaisson, the Executive Director of the Port of South Louisiana.

The Port of South Louisiana is the largest tonnage port in the Western Hemisphere. The Port occupies 54 miles of the Lower Mississippi River and is located between the Port of New Orleans and Port of Baton Rouge. Our jurisdiction comprises the three Parishes of St. Charles, St. John The Baptist, and St. James.

Besides our Port of South Louisiana being the largest tonnage port in the Western Hemisphere, the port also handles 50% of all of the import and export cargo in the State of Louisiana. Within our port district, we have four major oil refineries, twelve chemical plants, eight grain elevators, and numerous other industrial facilities. The Port of South Louisiana receives over 4,000 deep draft vessel calls in our port each year, as well as 55,000 large movements within the port.

The parishes surrounding the Port of South Louisiana, not to mention the entire State of Louisiana, are considered in attainment for Particulate Matter and NOx. S. 1499, the "Marine Vessel Emissions Reduction Act of 2007", which seeks to address an air quality problem, appears to be more of a California problem than for those of us in Louisiana on

the lower Mississippi River. In the Port of South Louisiana, we are very concerned that without this being handled internationally, this legislation would place our ports in Louisiana including the Port of South Louisiana, at a disadvantage cost-wise and could cost us to lose the market share of trade that comes into our ports.

The lower Mississippi River including the district of our ports are responsible for 15-20% of our nation's refining of gasoline, jet fuel, diesel, and heating fuel which we ship these through pipelines across the United States is so desperately needed by Americans. Therefore, by placing our Louisiana ports at an economic disadvantage, this legislation would truly affect not only the Port of South Louisiana, but also the State of Louisiana and the United States.

The Port of South Louisiana has been willing and continues to support exploration for hydrocarbons, and oil and gas in the Gulf of Mexico. Without the Gulf of Mexico and the hydrocarbons it produces, the United States would find itself in a very difficult position. Additionally, our Port has many exports and imports to and from across the world including Mexico, Venezuela, the North Sea, and from Africa. A great deal of the imports of all of our oil comes from these areas abroad to be refined at the refineries in our port district in Louisiana. Therefore, the United States should not put our ports at an economic disadvantage to the rest of the world and instead address this from an international level, not unilaterally. While I don't oppose cleaner air, I fear this legislation would truly affect Louisiana and the United States without being approached internationally and while negotiations are being worked out internationally to address this issue.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before this committee today. I look forward to answering any questions.