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Broad Coalition Backs New House Green Jobs Bill to Empower America's Ports to Spur Economic Development, Enact and Safeguard Environmental Programs

58 Legislators Introduce Clean Ports Act to Put the Brakes on Dirty Diesel Fleets, Lower Costs for Working Families, Boost U.S. Truck Manufacturing and Related Sectors

WASHINGTON, DC – A nationwide coalition of [120](#) environmental, public health, labor, business, consumer advocacy, faith and community organizations today applauded Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-NY) and 57 other House members from 15 states for introducing promising new legislation that would accelerate the speed and success of clean fleet turnover plans at U.S. seaports, lower public health costs for taxpayers, and help America's truck drivers re-enter the ranks of the middle class.

Mr. Nadler is the senior Northeastern Democrat of the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee. Co-sponsors include key and ranking members who represent constituents on both coasts as well as land-locked districts.* The [EPA estimates 87 million Americans](#) who live and work in port regions are subjected to the preventable, costly and even fatal health consequences of diesel soot – asthma, cancer and heart disease – while poor air quality is a top reason to stall job-creating infrastructure projects. Pollution from trucks is a major culprit.

“The Clean Ports Act is a simple way for Washington to help local governments reduce emissions, create green jobs, improve public health, and help responsible businesses grow and compete as part of a national economic recovery strategy,” said David Foster, Executive Director of the BlueGreen Alliance, a partner in the Coalition for Clean & Safe Ports. “We commend Congressman Nadler and his colleagues, and we look forward to working with Congress this session to remove this barrier to progress in federal transportation policy.”

Supporters of federal action [include](#) the mayors of Los Angeles, New York, Newark, Oakland, and Seattle. Local, state, and national groups as diverse as Apollo Alliance, Sierra Club, Washington State Democratic Party, New Jersey Environmental Federation, Natural Resources Defense Council, Long Beach Alliance for Children with Asthma, International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, Center for Environmental Health, GreenFaith and Church Council of Greater Seattle have joined with multi-million dollar waterfront businesses like Crowley Maritime Corporation and [American Stevedoring Inc.](#) to call for the bill as well.

The Clean Ports Act specifically updates an obscure provision in the 30-year-old Federal Motor Carrier Act that a Beltway trucking lobby with ties to big oil has exploited to unravel the LA Clean Truck Program, the nation's most successful program for slashing heavy-duty diesel-truck emissions, forcing other local officials to put similar comprehensive plans on hold. The Ports of Los Angeles and Oakland and the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey – together handling over a third of the nation's container volume each year – have also pushed for legislation to confirm they have the regulatory authority to clean up trucking operations.

“We thank our Members of Congress for refusing to let powerful outside interests roll back all the green jobs and pollution clean-up we achieved in Southern California” said Long Beach resident Angelo Logan, Director of the East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice. “It's unconscionable to permit a greedy industry that feels entitled to zero regulations hide behind an

overlooked, outdated statute while workers, residents and taxpayers pay the real economic and environmental price for their dirty tricks.”

In 2008, Los Angeles officials sought a local solution to the market failure that has earned U.S. seaports the notorious reputation as “the place where old trucks go to die.” Lax oversight allows some 5,500 port trucking companies nationwide to skirt tax laws and push all the costs of doing business onto their drivers by misclassifying them as independent contractors. Accordingly, academics put average driver take-home pay at [\\$10-11](#) an hour making it no surprise that this workforce can only afford to haul in the oldest, most decrepit clunkers. Ninety-five percent of our nation’s 110,000 port trucks fail to meet current EPA emission standards.

“If these drivers were in a position to purchase and care for environmentally-friendly trucks with their current wages, the air pollution that threatens to impede our growth and efficiency wouldn’t be an issue in the first place,” said Matt Yates, Director of Commercial Operations for American Stevedoring, Inc. “Modernizing the port is a long-term investment that merits real capital and real commitment between port authorities and private businesses – not workers behind the wheel.”

The LA Clean Truck Program was developed to shift the financial burden of fleet replacement off the backs of individual workers and onto the broad shoulders of the powerful logistics industry – with a negligible effect on consumer prices. This approach is [endorsed](#) by Federal Maritime Commission Chair Richard Lindinsky, Jr., Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi; Senators Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) and Robert Menendez (D-NJ).

Los Angeles’ attractive financial incentives leveraged \$600 million in private investment from both small and large trucking companies to put 6,600 clean diesel and alternative fuel vehicles in service. Other key operational standards encouraged thousands of drivers like 7-year veteran Roger Andino to eagerly retire their old polluting rigs in exchange for jobs that promised set hourly wages, clean vehicles at no cost, and workplace protections that come with legitimate employment.

Officials announced a near 80 percent reduction in emissions and struggling local truck manufacturers saw business up by [one-third](#), but then the American Trucking Associations gutted the [EPA award-winning program](#) in U.S. District court to return to the status quo. In the fifteen months since, some haulers at the nation’s largest port complex report that their earnings have [dropped](#) below minimum wage because a once-transforming industry is now deducting the truck payments and other operation costs straight from their paychecks via lease scams currently being [investigated](#) by the U.S. House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure.

The success of LA’s program and future port plans hang in limbo as the city awaits a final ruling.

[A joint op-ed in today’s Politico](#) by Sierra Club Chairman Carl Pope and Teamsters General President James P. Hoffa summarized: “This bill gives America’s port officials the authority to set and enforce the labor and environmental standards needed to tackle 21st century challenges....the Clean Ports Act is the best way to eliminate the sweatshops on wheels that have plagued a critical U.S. industry for too long. Congress should look under the hood and fix the outdated federal laws that are stalling economic and environmental progress and keeping America’s workers off the road to recovery.”

*Bill and sponsor list can be accessed at <http://thomas.loc.gov/> Click [here](#) for Rep. Nadler’s announcement.

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*The **Coalition for Clean & Safe Ports** is a unique partnership of environmental, public health, community, labor, faith, business, civil rights, and environmental justice organizations that promote sustainable economic development at ports coast to coast to make the port trucking system a less polluting, more competitive generator of good quality jobs for residents, workers and business alike. We are over 120 organizations strong nationwide. Visit us at www.cleanandsafeports.org to learn more about our efforts at the federal level and in Los Angeles, Long Beach, Oakland, Seattle, Tacoma, New York, Newark and South Florida.*