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Church Council of Greater Seattle Marks the Anniversary of the Los Angeles Clean Truck Program

A Statement by Rev. Monica Corsaro, social justice officer and the Rev. Dick Gillett, member of the Board of Directors, Church Council of Greater Seattle

“The Social Justice committee of the Greater Seattle Council of Churches, an ecumenical organization of over 300 member churches in the Greater Seattle area, has been involved for some months in planning and orientation meetings convened by the Clean and Safe Ports campaign of Greater Seattle. We have also been following the port situations in the other West Coast cities of Los Angeles and Oakland.

“We join the Coalition for Clean and Safe Ports and several dozen other organizations around the country to call for an amendment of the Federal Aviation Administration Adjustment Act (FAAAA) so as to allow full implementation of environmental and public health protections for our communities.

“As a church-based social justice committee of the Church Council, we recently have heard the stories of drivers who regularly drive big rigs in and out of the Port of Seattle. We've also driven through two communities most affected by the passage of these huge trucks (Georgetown and South Park) and have talked to community residents. We can readily see the multiple problems caused by the current situation. Studies here have shown significant threats to public health from the trucks' pollution and the concomitant large release of pollutant matter into the air of our communities.

“Not only this, but the plight of poorly paid independent contract truckers who must pay their own health plan costs (or go without coverage altogether), lack basic wage and hour protections, are denied unemployment and workers compensation, and maintain their own trucks, is a situation crying out for remedy. It is also of a piece with the environmental goals of cleaner and safer ports.

“We have reviewed the early successes of the Clean Truck Program in Los Angeles and see it as a model of what needs to be done in Seattle, as well as in the rest of our nation's ports. The goals imbedded in the CTP are in fact emblematic of the broad environmental, public health and community goals of the Obama Administration. We strongly recommend the amendment of the aforementioned FAAA so as to permit such programs to be developed both here in Seattle, and elsewhere.”

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