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We Must Protect LA's Emission Reductions

A Statement by volunteer Tom Politeo of the Sierra Club Harbor Vision Task Force on the One-Year Anniversary of the Clean Truck Program

"Today we stand with over 100 environmental, public health labor and community coalition partners to applaud the economic and environmental benefits brought to Southern California during the first year of the landmark Clean Truck Program adopted by Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, the City Council of Los Angeles and its Board of Harbor Commissioners.

"California is home to our nation's largest economic trade complex. Unfortunately, freight transport at Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach also generate massive amounts of diesel pollution that cause high rates of cancer, asthma, respiratory illness and premature death. Port truck pollution, in particular, is a big culprit and a real killer.

"Thanks to its aggressive standards and powerful market incentives, in just twelve months the Port of Los Angeles has leveraged over \$500 million in private investment to help put nearly 6,000 clean trucks into service. They have banned 2,000 of the dirtiest rigs that were built last century. They are giving a real boost to the local truck market, with sales up by one-third amidst a nationwide downturn. These achievements will allow the Ports to meet their 2012 goal of 80 percent emissions reductions from overall drayage operations three years ahead of schedule.

"But this wildly successful program that proves that environmental stewardship and economic growth are compatible is nonetheless being threatened in court by industry clean-air opponents. The American Trucking Association wants workers and taxpayers to foot the bill for the pollution its companies create, and has taken the San Pedro Bay Ports to court.

"We stand with our coalition partners around the country in calling on Congress to step in to protect the Clean Truck Program, so irresponsible industry polluters cannot hide behind decades-old law or stop America's major ports like Los Angeles, Oakland, New York and New Jersey who are seeking real solutions to 21st century problems."

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Since 1892, the Sierra Club has been working to protect communities, wild places, and the planet itself. We are the oldest, largest, and most influential grassroots environmental organization in the United States.