

P R E S S R E L E A S E

SOUTH BAY AFL-CIO LABOR COUNCIL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Jody Meacham (408) 269-7872

Chavez asks Congress to protect year-old program that cuts truck-caused air pollution at SoCal ports

SAN JOSE – Cindy Chavez, executive officer of the South Bay AFL-CIO Labor Council, has announced her support for the Clean Truck Program of the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach in a letter to members of California’s congressional delegation.

“In its first year, the Clean Truck Program has helped put more than 5,000 clean trucks into service at the two Southern California ports and removed 2,000 dirty trucks from operation,” Chavez wrote of the approaching Oct. 1 anniversary of the program. “The air is cleaner, and the risks of cancer, asthma, respiratory illness and premature death for those who work in the ports and those who live nearby have been reduced. Don’t turn the clock back.”

The program is under attack by the American Trucking Association and others interested in shifting the burden of pollution abatement onto truck drivers and taxpayers.

The text of Chavez’ full letter is below.

The South Bay AFL-CIO Labor Council represents more than a 100 unions in Santa Clara and San Benito counties and over 110,000 union members.

28 September 2009

Dear Member of Congress:

The Clean Truck Program at the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach will be one year old Oct. 1, an anniversary that should be celebrated by all Americans for the economic and environmental

benefits that it has brought to Southern California and which could be realized at other U.S. ports such as ours in Oakland.

Instead of celebration, however, the anniversary marks another day in a fight to protect hard-won progress for poorly paid truck drivers and the health of those who breathe polluted air in the vicinity of large ports. The American Trucking Association hopes to shift financial responsibility for problems its members have created onto those who suffer the consequences. It wants drivers to bear the costs of upgrading truck fleets and residents to accept dirty air as their lot.

I write on behalf of the 110,000 union members in California's Santa Clara and San Benito Counties represented by the South Bay AFL-CIO Labor Council to urge you to protect the Clean Truck Program against the trucking association and other clean-air opponents.

In its first year, the Clean Truck Program has helped put more than 5,000 clean trucks into service at the two Southern California ports and removed 2,000 dirty trucks from operation. The air is cleaner, and the risks of cancer, asthma, respiratory illness and premature death for those who work in the ports and those who live nearby have been reduced. Don't turn the clock back.

Sincerely,

Cindy Chavez
Executive Officer
South Bay AFL-CIO Labor Council