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NEW REPORT ON PORT TRUCKING DETAILS IMMINENT THREATS TO ONE OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE CLEAN-AIR PROGRAMS IN THE NATION

Environmentalists, Residents, and Port Workers Hail “From Clean to Clunker: The Economics of Emissions Control” by the Sierra Club, BlueGreen Alliance, LAANE, and the Teamsters

LOS ANGELES, CA – Less than a week before the trucking industry puts the U.S. EPA award-winning LA Clean Truck Program on trial, a new report issued by several reputable “blue-green” organizations warns that Southern California trucking companies must resume financial responsibility for their fleet or the new engines will pollute. Port drivers who lack sufficient resources to properly maintain their company’s clean trucks and are often forced to skimp on repairs stood alongside their environmental, community and labor advocates to present [“From Clean to Clunker: The Economics of Emissions Control”](#) to the Los Angeles Board of Harbor Commissioners this morning.

The new data reveals the cost of truck maintenance, coupled with the financial inability of individual drivers to meet this challenge, pose a profound environmental threat to clean-air gains initially achieved by the LA Clean Truck Program. The lead author, Sejal Patel of LAANE, analyzed data from port drivers, mechanics, air regulators, and freight carriers. The findings come a year after a deep-pocketed special interest, the American Trucking Associations (ATA), stalled full implementation of the green-growth program. The data also underscores the environmental risk for other U.S. ports being pressured by the Virginia-based industry group to put onerous and unreasonable costs onto the backs of individual drivers who earn \$10-11/hr, rather than capitalized trucking companies that receive large public subsidies and incentives to acquire their fleets.

A Transportation & Infrastructure subcommittee will learn about these issues at a Congressional hearing scheduled for May 5 in Washington, DC. Other powerful “From Clean to Clunker” findings include:

- The average cost of maintaining a clean truck in its first 12 months of service is \$2,200 and rapidly accelerates over time.
- Adding typical wear-and-tear repairs to routine maintenance pushes out-of-pocket costs to port drivers in excess of \$8,500 annually. Over the course of a standard 7-year lease the total cost can skyrocket to nearly \$60,000.
- These expenditures are over 70 percent higher than what drivers typically paid to maintain the old dirty diesel trucks they drove prior to the implementation of the Clean Truck Program.

One long-time port truck driver cited in the report explains his inability to pay for maintenance: “Look, if I am barely making enough money to keep food in my refrigerator, you think I’m going to spend the little I have on the truck? As long as those trucks are moving we can ignore engine lights, smoke coming out and any weird noises they start making, the only thing we can’t ignore is our family asking us for food.”

Leading green-job advocates noted that trucking industry efforts to weaken the LA Clean Truck Program would have a detrimental impact on ports nationwide. Thousands of “independent” U.S. truck drivers now sentenced to low-wage jobs will be forced to buy expensive green trucks they cannot afford or maintain or face unemployment and port-area residents will continue to breathe toxic smog. Furthermore, job-creating expansion programs dependent on environmental clean-up could be frozen.

“The new research removes any doubt the Port of Los Angeles was correct to adopt a bold Clean Truck Program model,” Dave Foster, Executive Director of the BlueGreen Alliance said in the report foreword. “This

demonstrates that anything short of a port trucking market that economists refer to as ‘asset-based’ – meaning trucking companies are rightfully in charge of owning, operating and maintaining their own fleets – will result in a bankrupted workforce and a clean-air Catch 22.”

The LA Clean Truck Program slashed deadly truck emissions by 80 percent – two years ahead of schedule – making the program one of our nation’s most successful programs ever for reducing heavy-duty truck pollution. The report identifies serious risks that put Los Angeles’ stunning emissions progress in jeopardy. The report also reveals that improper maintenance of a 2007 to 2010 EPA-compliant engine can significantly reduce its environmental benefit. According to a 2009 EPA study, emissions from improperly maintained clean trucks can increase toxic fumes by as much as 80 percent - leading to asthma and increased cancer risk (PM2.5 emissions can increase by 50 percent and emissions of NOx can increase up to 80 percent).

When the Los Angeles Harbor Commission adopted Clean Truck Program in 2008, long-term environmental sustainability was a key factor of their consideration. The commission noted that “it is well known that pollution controls on trucks deteriorate over time if they are not properly maintained...A new ‘clean’ truck will become ‘dirty’ fairly soon without periodic, expensive maintenance.”

Industry opposition to the company maintenance requirements threatens to dismantle the Port of Los Angeles’ strategy to clean the air, improve business efficiency and instantly create good green jobs, a comprehensive approach that enjoyed broad support from leading economists and environmentalists alike.

Background

The American Trucking Associations launched a multi-million dollar legal assault on the program and was granted a temporary court order a year ago that again placed the financial responsibilities of operating and maintaining publicly subsidized EPA-compliant vehicles onto the backs of the contracted drivers.

An estimated 87 million Americans now live and work in port regions that violate federal air quality standards where diesel soot-induced asthma, cancer and respiratory illnesses rates are disproportionately high. Given the ATA’s numerous legal attacks on clean air and environment protection efforts over the years, three major American port complexes have formally urged Congress to modernize antiquated federal transportation law to address 21st century public health and air pollution crisis that threaten vital job-creating expansion projects at our nation’s ports.

The industry’s vigorous opposition has compelled a nationwide coalition of over 100 environmental, public health, labor, community, and faith groups to join the mayors of Los Angeles, New York, Newark, Seattle, Oakland and Broward County in Florida to urge Congress to ensure local governments can fully implement market-based solutions that will sustainably clean up port trucking, ending the industry’s race to the bottom.

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***LAANE** is a leading advocacy organization dedicated to building a new economy for all. Combining dynamic research, innovative public policy and the organizing of broad alliances, LAANE promotes a new economic approach based on good jobs, thriving communities and a healthy environment. Since 2006, LAANE is active in the Southern California arm of the Coalition for Clean & Safe Ports, a national alliance of port truck drivers and over 100 environmental, labor, faith-based, community, transportation and public-health organizations working to promote sustainable trade at U.S. seaports.*

*The **BlueGreen Alliance** unites over 8.5 million people in pursuit of good jobs, a clean environment and a green economy. Launched in 2006 by the United Steelworkers and the Sierra Club, this unique national collaboration has grown to include the Communications Workers of America, Natural Resources Defense Council, Service Employees International Union, Laborers’ International Union of North America, Utility Workers Union of America, American Federation of Teachers, Amalgamated Transit Union, and Sheet Metal Workers’ International Association.*

*Since 1892, the **Sierra Club** has been working to protect communities, wild places, and the planet itself. Representing 1.3 million members, it is the oldest, largest, and most influential grassroots environmental organization. The Sierra Club played a pivotal role in the passage and enactment of the Port of Los Angeles’ award-winning Clean Truck Program in 2008 and is fighting to protect this sweeping green-growth model so it can be replicated at ports nationwide.*

Founded in 1903, the **International Brotherhood of Teamsters** represents 1.4 million hardworking men and women in the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico. The Teamsters, the nation's largest union of transportation workers, joined forces with environmental and community allies on both coasts to make America's trade hubs a less polluting, more competitive generator of good quality jobs. Its Port Division is committed to restoring middle-class wages in harbor trucking.