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NOT JUST A CALIFORNIA PROBLEM: New Report Links Poor Industry Standards in Port Trucking to Public Health Crisis on Both Coasts

Diesel Pollution Claims More Lives Each Year Than New York and New Jersey Homicides Combined

NEWARK, NJ – A major new report by the Coalition for Healthy Ports finds mounting evidence that lax regulation in the national port trucking system has triggered a broad public health crisis similar to that in the California port communities of Long Beach, Los Angeles and Oakland. The release of the report precedes an expected announcement from the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey banning old trucks at the region's ports.

Hazardous to Our Health: The Human Impact of Port Truck Pollution on Truck Drivers and Residents in New York and New Jersey collects, compares, and analyzes the latest data on the relevant environmental and public health issues in the region. The findings reinforce the need for clean truck campaigns and responsible regulation in port areas across the country. Some of the major findings include:

- Premature deaths attributed to diesel pollution in New York and New Jersey will reach more than 3,100 in 2010, according to the Clean Air Task Force. That's five-and-a-half times the number of homicides in the cities of Newark and New York City combined in 2008, and over two-and-a-half times more than the murder rate across the states of New York and New Jersey in the same year.
- In northern New Jersey, and particularly in Newark, asthma rates are disproportionately high – with 1 out of 4 children suffering from the illness compared to 1 out of 12 in areas further removed from the polluting ports.
- Richmond County on Staten Island has high asthma rates among residents living adjacent to the Howland Hook port, and ranks 20th in the country with regard to health risks from diesel soot. The risk of getting cancer among residents in Staten Island is now 703 times greater than the Environmental Protection Agency's acceptable cancer risk level.

"Diesel pollution from old trucks going in and out of the ports is not only making port workers and residents here in Newark sick, but also people in communities in Jersey City, Staten Island, and the Bronx to name a few," said Ana Baptista of the Ironbound Community Corporation, a partner in the Coalition for Healthy Ports. "In the Ironbound community, toxic trucks routinely clog our roads as they drive by schools, parks and residences – leading to increased rates of asthma and significantly elevated cancer risks.

The trucking industry has become accustomed to few rules and has failed to regulate itself or take responsibility for polluting our communities.”

Leading environmental organizations, community groups, health experts, and labor unions have banded together to address the growing health crisis in the NY-NJ region, and to demand that the Port Authority require trucking companies to invest in new, cleaner fleets of trucks, as the Port of Los Angeles has successfully done.

The Port of Los Angeles’ landmark Clean Truck Program has reduced pollution from port rigs by nearly 80 percent in one year. In addition, because of a pivotal and innovative provision in the policy, low-wage contract drivers are not expected to carry the burden of costs for cleaning up the pollution – making it the most pragmatic, sustainable, and “smart” policy of its kind.

“You can’t simply ban old trucks from the ports,” said Amy Goldsmith, chair of the Coalition and executive director of the New Jersey Environmental Federation. “It may work for the environment in the short term, but it also puts hundreds of truck drivers out of work, as evidenced by the experiences at the ports of Oakland and Long Beach.”

A major stumbling block to the creation of clean port truck policies across the country has been significant trucking industry opposition. Big trucking companies are trying to force the cost of expensive clean trucks onto the shoulders of the low-wage contractor drivers – who typically earn \$28,000 a year, according to a Rutgers study, and own and operate old, dirty, substandard vehicles because they cannot afford engine retrofits or replacements.

“There’s no question the Port Authority must act in the public interest and implement a long-term and sustainable plan to improve air quality in our region,” said Fred Potter, International Vice President of the Teamsters. “The problem is that polluters in the trucking industry expect their workers and taxpayers to foot the bill, while we believe it should be the responsibility of trucking companies to make those investments in new technology and clean trucks.”

In light of industry opposition, that may not be so easy. Earlier this year, the country’s biggest and most powerful trucking lobby, the Virginia-based American Trucking Association, obtained a temporary injunction against the clean-air program in Los Angeles, shirking industry responsibility for the consequences of its own fleets.

This maneuver now threatens to roll back the emissions-reduction progress being made in Southern California, and deter port officials around the country from enacting a similar model – at precisely the time that increasing evidence points to a growing public health crisis in these communities.

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The **Coalition for Healthy Ports** is a partnership of environmental, public health, community, labor and faith organizations that promote sustainable economic development at ports of New York and New Jersey. We are working to make the port trucking system a less polluting, more competitive generator of

good quality jobs for residents of New York and New Jersey. The **Coalition for Clean and Safe Ports** is the sister alliance working to create cleaner, greener ports in cities around the country. We are over 100 organizations strong nationwide.