

September, 2007

Mayor Bob Foster
333 West. Ocean Blvd., 14th Floor
Long Beach, California 90802

Dear Mayor Foster,

I support the Ports' Clean Trucks Program! But we can't wait for 5 years, we need change now. Fast transition to employee status is the key factor in the Ports' innovative green economic proposal to clean the air, create healthy communities and improve jobs.

Responsibility for buying and maintaining the trucks that move goods from the LA and Long Beach Ports to the Big Box stores currently rests on the backs of the 16,000 area port truck drivers -- instead of the for-profit companies who contract them. It's a failing, unworkable system and I agree with the Ports' proposal to change a major source of the pollution in the our communities across Southern California. After all, once the drivers pay insurance, taxes, gas, and other operating expenses, they in effect become minimum wage workers unable to meet clean air compliance standards.

That's why the provision that would transform the underpaid drivers' status as "independent contractors" into employees in order to hold the trucking companies accountable to new environmental and labor standards is so important. It's the only way to hold trucking companies and their shipper clients accountable for halting deadly pollution.

It's time to establish real and enforceable standards for all trucking companies that do business on port property. They should to take on the responsibility for buying, retrofitting, and maintaining environmentally clean trucks. I urge you to implement the employee status provision, because I want my children to grow up breathing healthy air.

Sincerely,