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PORT OF LONG BEACH UNVEILS \$9M SHIPLOADER, COMPLETES COMPLIANCE WITH COKE DUST REGULATIONS

LONG BEACH, Calif. – The Port of Long Beach marked early compliance with all regional air quality regulations aimed at reducing petroleum coke dust Friday by providing an up-close look at a new \$9 million ship loader at Pier G and recognizing members of the community who helped meet environmental targets.

Assemblymember Alan Lowenthal, D-Long Beach, Long Beach Mayor Beverly O’Neill, Harbor Commissioner James C. Hankla, Port Executive Director Richard D. Steinke and other officials declared that the Port had met mandates governing the handling, transportation and storage of petroleum coke contained in South Coast Air Quality Management District Rule 1158.

Deadlines in Rule 1158 were accelerated by Lowenthal’s Assembly Bill 1775, which was signed by former Gov. Gray Davis in 2000. The Port met every mandate in the bill on or ahead of schedule.

“The Port of Long Beach is proud to announce that it has measured significant reductions in what was once a great nuisance for the residents of Long Beach,” Hankla said. “There is far less dust coating our city than there was just a couple of years ago.”

Petroleum coke is a carbon-based byproduct of oil refining. It is shipped from the Port of Long Beach overseas, where it is used as a fuel source, and is the Port’s largest export commodity. Before implementation of Rule 1158, pet coke dust from storage piles, ships

and equipment would escape and settle on windowsills, driveways cars and other locations throughout the Harbor area.

Because of the Port initiatives, recent dust samples in the Long Beach area found that the petroleum coke content comprised only 3 to 5 percent – down from 21 percent in 1997.

The reductions are tied to several initiatives at the Port, which enclosed pet coke conveyors and transfer towers, covered and eliminated outdoor coke storage areas and upgraded the railyard, improving drainage and paving between the tracks.

Other measures include improvements to existing rotary rail/truck dump building to control dust, building a truck dump enclosure and an enclosed waste coke storage shed and installing new truck-washing facilities.

The Port also purchased new street sweepers capable of picking up very fine particles and implemented extensive best-management practices, highlighting regimented good housekeeping measures to clean up any fugitive coke dust.

The new ship loader, opened in early April, is the final piece of the puzzle. The equipment is able to reach directly into the hauls of large vessels, greatly minimizing the escape of coke dust.

“These combined efforts led to the significant and measurable decline in petroleum coke citywide,” said Dr. Robert Kanter, Ph.D., director of planning and environmental affairs at the Port of Long Beach. “We are committed to a series of environmental initiatives and consider this an early step, but by no means the final one, in our Healthy Harbor program.”

At the event, Steinke gave certificates of appreciation to members of a Community Consultative Committee that helped review efforts by the Port to reduce the amount of coke dust released into the air. Members of the committee included local residents. Other awards went to students and teachers from Long Beach Wilson and Cabrillo high schools, who employed the scientific method to measure the drop in pet coke pollution. Steinke also took time to thank Port staff and consultants who contributed to the projects.

“Everyone from elected officials to port staff and consultants to local students played a role in the success of this project,” he said. “And in turn, everyone in the community will benefit from cleaner air and less pet coke pollution.”

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