The Port of LONG BEACH

News Release

Clean Air Measures Cut Port-related Pollution

Air quality improves significantly in latest study

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A new air-quality analysis shows the ships, trains, trucks and other goods-movement machinery at the Port of Long Beach produced less pollution in 2007, the first year after the passage of the landmark Clean Air Action Plan.

Despite a 9 percent increase in the amount of cargo moved, many major pollutants including diesel particulates were significantly reduced in 2007 compared to 2005, thanks to the use of cleaner fuels and the replacement of older equipment. Still, two pollutants, smog-forming nitrogen oxides and carbon monoxide, saw slight increases.

The findings are part of a detailed, annual "emissions inventory" produced by the Port as part of the Clean Air Action Plan, which was approved by the Long Beach Board of Harbor Commissioners in November 2006, after the Board enacted its landmark environmental protection Green Port Policy in January 2005. Inventories compiled for 2005 and 2006 had shown increases in emissions compared to earlier years. This new report for 2007 is the first to reflect a decline in pollutants.

"These are good results, showing that pollution levels in many categories had dropped to 2004 and earlier levels," said Nick Sramek, Vice President of the Long Beach Board of Harbor Commissioners. "But we can do better, and in coming inventories, with the implementation of additional Clean Air Action Plan measures, we expect to see bigger, across-the-board improvements in air quality.

"We can thank our partners – the operators of the terminals, vessels, trains and trucks here at the Port – for the progress in improving air quality."

Particulates from diesel exhaust – a pollutant linked to adverse health effects of great concern to the community – dropped by about 20 percent from 2005 to 2007. In that period, the number of vessel calls lessened but there was a 9 percent increase in the amount of cargo containers, as fewer, but larger ships visited the Port.

Greenhouse gases (GHG) such as carbon dioxide increased slightly from 2005 to 2007, but not as much as the increase in cargo. The Clean Air Action Plan does not include greenhouse gas reduction measures, but some measures do have GHG co-benefits and the ports have begun work on strategies to cut greenhouse gases.

Among the findings of the 2007 emissions inventory:

• Pollution from ships, including particulate matter and sulfur oxides, declined because vessel operators complied with a California Air Resources Board regulation on the use of low-sulfur fuels in auxiliary engines. Also, they participated in Port of Long Beach air quality efforts such as the Green Flag Vessel Speed Reduction Program, where ships slow down voluntarily to cut pollutants.

• For harbor craft, locomotives and heavy-duty trucks, the enormous reduction in sulfur oxides – 32 percent – is due to the introduction of ultra-low-sulfur diesel fuel.

• The PierPASS program to shift truck traffic to off-peak hours at the ports has greatly reduced heavy-duty truck idling time, down from about 3.8 million idling hours in 2005 to 2.5 million in 2007.

• Replacement of cargo-handling equipment such as yard tractors with new, cleaner equipment has helped to reduce emissions from that category of vehicles.

The executive summary and the complete 2007 Emissions Inventory is available at http://www.polb.com/environment/air_quality/emissions.asp.

View the video presentation here.

For a copy of the PowerPoint, click here.