

March 4, 2010

Support Clean Port Trucks Legislation

Dear Representative:

On behalf of Change to Win, a partnership of labor unions representing more than 5 million workers, I am writing to urge you to sign the "Dear Colleague" letter being circulated by Congressman Jerrold Nadler in support of an important legislative proposal that would simultaneously clean up pollution at America's public seaports and stop the exploitation of hard-working port truck drivers.

Our nation's broken port trucking system is inhibiting growth of these vital economic engines because of thousands of dirty diesel trucks raising asthma and cancer rates for millions of Americans. The root cause for all this pollution is analyzed in a recently published *New York Times* article on the front page of the business section Friday, February 26, 2010, titled "Clearing the Air at American Ports." Simply put, the reason port trucks are so antiquated and polluting is directly tied to the economic condition of port drivers. Trucking companies misclassify their drivers as independent contractors, requiring them to buy and maintain their own trucks, but paying them little more than minimum wage and no benefits.

Port trucking -- a skilled profession that once provided truckers with middle-class incomes -- exemplifies the economic backslide and disappearance of the American middle-class. Over the last several decades this industry has witnessed a widespread decline in wages, working conditions and benefits.

In response to this seemingly intractable problem, the Port of Los Angeles enacted a landmark Clean Truck Program (CTP) in 2008. In a mere 18 months, the Program has possibly become the most successful diesel emissions reduction program in history. In our worst economic recession in decades, the Program incentivized over \$500 million in private investment to purchase over 6000 new clean diesel and alternative energy trucks.

Equally important, the L.A. Program has the potential to transform this now low-income job back into a stable middle-class career path for hard-working Americans and their families. The CTP has also helped local businesses despite the recession. Truck dealers near the Port of L.A. are experiencing more than a 30% increase in sales despite the recession and a 60% decrease in truck sales nationwide.

In response to unconscionable legal attacks launched by the American Trucking Association to undo the incredible success of this Program and keep tens of thousands of port truck drivers across the country in working poverty, mayors from across the

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country have called for more local authority allowing ports to move forward with innovative programs like L.A.'s Clean Truck Program. Mayors Villaraigosa from Los Angeles, Bloomberg from New York, Booker from Newark, Dellums from Oakland, McGinn from Seattle and Ritter from Broward County, FL, have all called for Congress to update the Federal Motor Carrier Act so that we can modernize port trucking and bring it into the 21st Century.

I hope we can count on your support for our efforts to simultaneously reduce port pollution and create good, green American jobs. You can do this by contacting Lisette Morton at Lisette.Morton@mail.house.gov to sign onto Congressman Nadler's letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anna Burger". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Anna" being more prominent than the last name "Burger".

Anna Burger, Chair