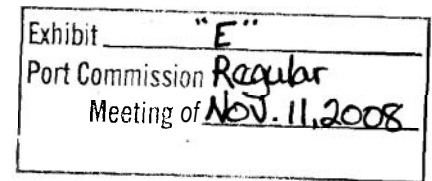


Barack Obama

November 2, 2007



Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, City of Los Angeles
Mayor Robert Foster, City of Long Beach
Mayor Ron Dellums, City of Oakland

Dear Mayors Villaraigosa, Foster, and Dellums:

I write to express my support for the efforts you are making to ensure that our ports are environmentally sound, secure, and supporting middle class living standards for those working there. Americans are anxious about increased trade, its relationship to middle class jobs available in America, and what that economic activity -- both as a **matter of production** and transport of goods -- is doing to the environment. Those concerns and challenges **come** to a head at the ports in your cities and I commend your leadership in addressing them.

In particular, the Clean Trucks Program recognizes trade, labor, and the environment are not separate, but linked issues. The program sets up tough standards to clean up truck diesel emissions and provides generous **subsidies** for vehicle purchase and retrofit. And it also recognizes that responsibility for investing in higher standards is best borne by firms rather than the individual truck drivers fighting to make a living with little leverage to negotiate for better pay.

Because the trucking companies that operate at the ports have adopted the strategy of holding down costs by classifying their personnel as independent contractors, each individual driver is today responsible for his truck and its environmental impact. But most are independent only in the sense that they own the truck they operate and are struggling to pay it off. Many of these truckers may be legally misclassified. Worker misclassification is an issue I have worked on at the federal level to remedy because it hurts workers and costs the taxpayer billions in uncollected taxes. In this case, whether they are misclassified or not, the dependence on poorly paid truckers is leading to the use of trucks ill equipped to **minimize** the impact on the environment.

According to a recent survey of truckers at the ports, five out of six drivers only work for one trucking company at a time and nearly nine in ten own only one truck. They are dependent on the trucking companies for work. Those companies and the big box retailers reap the rewards of increased imports while the truckers who transport those goods are paid poorly and receive few benefits. **After** expenses, fuel and insurance, they take home **roughly** \$29,000 per year and struggle to afford routine repairs and upgrades. That has repercussions for the drivers and the environment.

Adopting the Clean Trucks Program will make it possible to ensure that the pollution these trucks are creating and the low compensation truckers receive are reversed. I support your efforts to work with the Harbor Commissioners in your respective cities to adopt a strong Clean Trucks Program promoting the cleanest available technology and a transition away **from ports** relying on trucking companies that act as brokers to ones that treat their **personnel** as employees. Both steps are necessary to meet emissions reductions targets and ensure that jobs at our ports are middle class jobs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barack Obama".

Barack Obama

CC: David Freeman, President
Los Angeles Board of Harbor Commission
Mario Cordero, President
Long Beach Board of Harbor Commission
Anthony **Batarse**, Jr., President
Harbor Commissioners, Port of Oakland



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