

# United States Senate

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March 19, 2008

Honorable Antonio Villaraigosa  
Mayor  
City of Los Angeles  
200 North Spring Street, Room 303  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Mayor Villaraigosa:

I write to express my support for the efforts underway by the Port of Los Angeles to implement a clean trucks plan that will dramatically improve air quality and the health of our communities in Southern California. I thank you for your leadership on this urgent environmental and public health issue.

I believe the Port of Los Angeles Clean Truck Program will help clean up the air quickly and sustainably – reducing congestion, improving working conditions and labor standards for port truck drivers, and strengthening port safety and security.

As you know, the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach handle nearly 45 percent of the containerized cargo imported into the U.S., with an estimated value of nearly \$200 billion, and this trade is expected to more than double by the year 2020. The Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach are critical to our entire nation's manufacturing and retail industries, providing jobs and economic benefits.

Over the past decade, however, the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach have had difficulty increasing their capacity due to environmental and public health concerns. In Southern California, port activities are major contributors to smog and soot pollution. Soot pollution alone is responsible for 5,400 premature deaths, 2,400 hospitalizations, 140,000 incidences of asthma and respiratory problems, and nearly one million lost work days each year in the area, according to the South Coast Air Quality Management District. And the effects of air pollution are most harmful to those most vulnerable: our children, our elderly, and people with asthma or other diseases. I share your belief that we must act decisively to address this public health crisis.

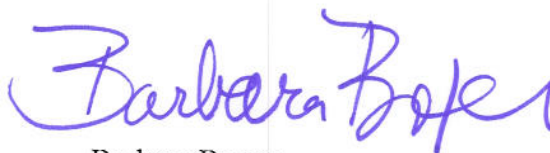
Furthermore, port-related congestion costs hundreds of millions of dollars in lost productivity and additional infrastructure costs. So there is not only an urgent environmental and public health cost to inaction, but a financial toll as well. We need a comprehensive approach to cleaning up the air at our ports that makes the health, safety and well-being of the millions of people who live and work in the port district a top priority.

As Chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, I have introduced the Marine Vessel Emission Reduction Act, a bill which requires oceangoing vessels visiting U.S. ports to use cleaner fuel and cleaner engines, whether they are flagged in the U.S. or elsewhere.

My bill would require oceangoing vessels to dramatically lower the sulfur content of the fuel they use as they travel to and from our ports. It would also significantly reduce emissions from both new and existing engines beginning in 2012 by requiring the use of the most advanced technologies. Local air officials estimate that our legislation would save 700 lives a year in Southern California, and many more lives nationally each year.

But we can and must do more. That is why I am so pleased that the Los Angeles Board of Harbor Commissioners is voting on the final piece of the Clean Trucks Program and I pledge to work with you to further the goals of this plan to safeguard the health of California's families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Barbara Boxer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Barbara" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Boxer".

Barbara Boxer  
U.S. Senator