



PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Paul Hubler
(626) 379-4937

ELECTED, TRANSPORTATION & AIR QUALITY OFFICIALS UNITE TO URGE LEGISLATURE & GOVERNOR TO ENACT LANDMARK STATE CARGO CONTAINER FEE LAW

(SAN GABRIEL, CALIF.) — Elected, transportation and air quality officials from across Southern California today urged the California Legislature and Governor to enact Senate Bill 974 (Lowenthal), which would raise approximately \$400 million a year through port cargo container fees, with revenues evenly split between air quality improvements and congestion relief projects.

The \$30 per-container fee will offset the traffic congestion and air pollution costs of goods movement and fairly places the cost of accommodating trade on those who directly benefit from it. Goods movement emissions cause 3,700 premature deaths a year and \$200 billion in cumulative health impacts in California and additional billions in traffic congestion costs.

“The cost of 3,700 premature deaths annually due to air pollution from goods movement is just too high,” said Martin Schlageter of the Coalition for Clean Air. “This is a fair way to share cost and reduce the impact on our communities. We owe it to the people of California, and especially the children growing up in our smoggy regions, to pass this sensible legislation.”

Once passed by the Assembly, which is expected by June 30, 2008, the legislation will be sent to Governor Schwarzenegger for signature by July 13, 2008.

Billions will have to be spent to improve railroads, rail yards and highways to keep up with rising international trade. The Governor’s Goods Movement Action Plan has identified numerous short to medium term infrastructure improvements that could benefit from funds raised through SB 974. Meanwhile, the fee on containers will raise the price of a DVD player by no more than a couple of pennies or the price of a pair of shoes by less than half a cent, estimate experts.

“We need to find ways to increase economic efficiency, mitigate congestion, and improve air quality and safety,” said Hasan Ikhtrata, Executive Director of the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG). “Southern California can maintain its competitive advantage to handle the growing volume of goods movement and solve the issues of congestion, emissions, and community impacts.”

“We believe the cargo container fee is a sensible and fair way to support grade separation projects and unclog traffic at roadway-railroad crossings. Goods movement imposes community

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burdens as well as benefits, and must share the cost of alleviating those burdens,” said Pomona Councilman George Hunter, Chair of the Alameda Corridor-East Construction Authority.

According to the Los Angeles Economic Development Corp., Southern California must spend at least \$10.5 billion to improve railroads, rail yards and highways to keep up with surging international trade or risk losing more than 500,000 new jobs and more than \$1 billion of taxes a year.

“We need a regional transportation system that operates cleanly and with less congestion while facing growing demands. SB 974 is essential to allowing growth in goods movement to continue in a sustainable way,” said Roger Snoble, Chief Executive Officer of Los Angeles County Metro.

“This is a net economic benefit for Southern California and the nation,” said Ron Wood, President of the San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership. “Congestion delays deliveries and workers, costing local businesses millions of dollars in lost productivity each year. SB 974 links growth in trade with transportation and air quality improvements for a more vibrant economy.”

Much of the trade arriving at the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles passes through the Inland Empire on its way to the rest of the nation. “Riverside County is where Southern California’s truck and train traffic converges, causing congestion and air pollution. We need SB 974 to alleviate these impacts,” said John Standiford of the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC). “It makes sense that everyone would share the cost of its impact to our residents and neighborhoods.”

An estimated 70 trains per day travel through north Orange County along the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway mainline on their way through the Inland Empire and to the rest of the country. By 2025, this line will carry an estimated 125 daily freight trains

“Arguably the movement of goods through and within the Inland Empire constitutes a greater impact on San Bernardino County’s transportation system and air quality than any other factor,” said City of Montclair Mayor Paul Eaton, Vice President of the San Bernardino Associated Governments (SANBAG). Studies performed by SANBAG estimate an increase in vehicular delay at railroad crossings from 500 hours per day in 1999 to more than 6,200 hours per day in 2020. “The impact of rail and truck traffic without the necessary resources to mitigate such impacts will increase freeway and major street congestion, degrade air quality, increase safety concerns, and increase maintenance needs of existing streets and freeways.”

The morning event took place in front of the historic San Gabriel Mission, near where the Alameda Corridor-East Construction Authority plans to build a railroad trench to reduce congestion from goods movement through the San Gabriel Valley. Clean-air advocates joined leaders from Los Angeles Metro, the Southern California Association of Governments, Orange County Transportation Authority, Riverside County Transportation Commission and Alameda Corridor-East Construction Authority. Officials pledged to continue working together on SB 974 and other local, regional and state solutions to increased traffic and air pollution from goods movement.