

ALAMEDA COUNTY HEALTH CARE SERVICES AGENCY
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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July 2, 2009

Commissioner Victor Uno, President
Commissioner Margaret Gordon
Commissioner Anthony A. Batarse, Jr.
Commissioner Pamela Calloway
Commissioner James Head
Commissioner Kenneth S. Katzoff

Port of Oakland
530 Water Street
Oakland, CA 94607

Dear Commissioners:

I would like to begin by thanking you for approving the new truck policy that includes a ban on pre-1994 trucks and 1994-2006 trucks that have not been retrofitted with soot filters. We commend you, the Oakland Port commissioners, and Executive Director Omar Benjamin for your leadership on this issue, as it will result in public health improvements in West Oakland and the other I-880 communities we serve.

While this truck ban is a tremendous step in the right direction, more needs to be done to put into place a sustainable plan that will ensure improved health outcomes in the long run. To this end, I am writing today to urge you to vote in favor of the resolution affirming the Beacon Economics study's recommendations regarding the need for an employee-based port trucking system. Under the current Port of Oakland trucking system, many Port truck drivers are relegated to poverty wages, in large part as a result of their status as independent contractors. The way truck system is currently set-up, the burden for updating and maintaining a clean fleet will fall on the backs of these low-income truck drivers.

Low-income people are at higher risk for a host of poor health outcomes, including limiting access to important health-enabling resources like proper nutrition, good medical care, and favorable housing. In order to avoid increasing the potential for poor health outcomes among the population of low-income truck drivers, effective solutions for community health must include access to safe, well-paid employment.

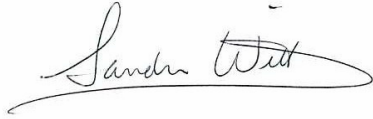
The Beacon Economics' recommendations make it clear that an employee driver-based port trucking system represents an economically viable solution in which the cost of a new fleet that protects residents against airborne toxins and carcinogens is not borne by low-income truck drivers. Even though the movement to an employee-based model has been slowed by recent legal challenges, we believe that your expressed support for the Beacon Economics' recommendation about the employee

model would send a clear message that the intent of the Port of Oakland is to protect the health and well-being of those who both live near and work at the Port.

Given the urgency of this issue, and the pressing need for long-term solutions, we encourage you to pass the resolution expressing the Port of Oakland's support for the Beacon Economics' recommendations.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important resolution.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sandra Witt". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Sandra Witt, MPH, PhD
Deputy Director of Planning, Policy and Health Equity
Alameda County Public Health Department

cc: Mr. Omar Benjamin, Executive Director
Alameda County Board of Supervisor Keith Carson
Alameda County Board of Supervisor Nate Miley
Alameda County Health Officer and Alameda County Public Health Department Director
Anthony Iton