



## **Solutions to the Port of Seattle's Truck Emission Problems**

The Port of Seattle operates the ninth largest port in the nation, as measured by container traffic passing through the port. The Port depends on a fleet of 1,500-2,000 trucks to move freight containers from dockside to rail yards in South Seattle. These trucks are some of the oldest and most polluting trucks in the region. They generate massive amounts of diesel pollution that public health officials say cause high rates of cancer, asthma, respiratory illness and premature death. Seattle is in the top 5 percent nationally of communities affected by cancer-causing particulate matter from diesel trucks, according to a 2008 EPA study. Residents of nearby neighborhoods — Georgetown and South Park — are not just concerned with truck emissions. They also worry about Port truck noise, parking and pedestrian safety issues, and about the noise problems created by Seattle-Tacoma Airport, which is also operated by the Port of Seattle.

### **The Port's Plan**

Port of Seattle commissioners' recently passed a "Clean Trucks Plan" that will ban the oldest, dirtiest trucks (pre-1994) from Port docks starting at the end of 2010, unless they are retrofitted to dramatically reduce emissions. Ironically, the Port wants to bring trucks to Seattle that are now illegal to operate elsewhere because they are too dirty. By 2015, trucks at the Port of Seattle will need to meet stronger 2007 standards for emissions.

Truck drivers, who contract independently with trucking companies to run their trucks in and out of the Port, either own their trucks or lease them. Buying or leasing a retrofitted truck would cost these drivers \$500-\$600 per month over several years, even with a \$5,000 "clunker" trade-in. The independent truck drivers do not make enough money to qualify for loans of the size needed. If truckers can't afford to buy or lease retrofitted trucks, Seattle's "Clean Trucks Plan" will fail and any effort to clean up the trucks' emissions will be significantly delayed. As for buying or leasing new, clean trucks, that is entirely out of the question — they often cost more than \$100,000.

Meanwhile, the Port's pledge to keep trucks away from residential neighborhoods has resulted in one new parking lot for 75 trucks near the Port. With a fleet of 1,500-2,000 trucks in regular use, this will have little impact. The Port has urged truck drivers to avoid residential neighborhoods, but residents say this has had negligible results.

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## **The Real Solution: A Comprehensive Clean Trucks Plan**

Since the Port of Los Angeles implemented its comprehensive Clean Trucks Plan in September, 2008, more than 5,000 clean trucks have entered service and 2,000 of the dirtiest trucks have been retired. Puget Sound Sage strongly supports the adoption of a similar comprehensive Clean Trucks Program by the Seattle Port Commission. The plan should require trucking companies doing business with the Port to:

- Enter into concession agreements that incorporate environmental, community and fair labor standards;
- No longer use independent contractors, and hire staff drivers;
- Provide drivers with clean-emission trucks; and
- Create off-street parking for trucks that is not in residential neighborhoods.

As a first step, Sage and Port neighbors ask that the Port conduct a comprehensive analysis of Port trucking emissions and noise, and their impact on the health of Georgetown and South Park residents.

## **The Other Issue: Sea-Tac Airport**

Port neighbors also seek solutions to airport noise problems that have intensified since the opening of the third runway in late 2008. Even though the new flight patterns are directly over South Park, the Port has not monitored airport noise in South Park during the past 10 years. As a first step, the Port should install noise monitoring equipment in South Park as part of its ongoing monitoring in other communities around Sea-Tac airport. The Port also needs to meet with South Park residents to discuss noise mitigation, including soundproofing of homes and schools. The Regional Commission on Airport Affairs has also recently made recommendations to the Port and to the FAA for airport noise reduction at Sea-Tac.