

Testimony of Supervisor Gary Ovitt

Senate Environment & Public Works Field Hearing
San Bernardino, California
October 10, 2007
9:00-11:00 am

Good Morning Senator Boxer (and distinguished members of the Committee *(if there are any in attendance)*). I come before you not only as a Supervisor from this county, but also as a Board Member of the South Coast Air Quality Management District and the President of the Southern California Association of Governments. Thank you very much for the opportunity to address this Committee about an issue of enormous importance to the health and well-being of our residents – and that is the quality of the air that we breathe.

The documented health impacts of air pollution on residents of the South Coast Air Basin are of paramount concern, particularly for those of us in the Inland Empire:

- ◆ A staggering 52% of national and 82% of statewide exposure to PM_{2.5} is above the federal health-based standard.

- ◆ Exposure to air pollution results in an estimated 5,400 premature deaths and 980,000 lost work days per year in the South Coast.

What I would like to do today is to briefly outline why it is we have such an acute problem in our region – worse really than any other region of the country – and what we need from the federal government to provide our residents with clean air to breathe.

More than 43% of the nation's seaborne container trade moves through the Los Angeles and Long Beach Ports. The Inland Empire is the recipient of much of the emissions arising from this trade since locomotives and trucks move the goods from the ports to distribution centers in the Inland Empire and also pass them through to other parts of the country.

Furthermore, the general onshore flow of air sends most of the pollution in the South Coast region eastward, where it is trapped by the San Gabriel and San Bernardino mountains. As a result, the Inland Empire experiences the worst air quality in the region and the nation.

To address the problem, the South Coast Air Quality Management District, the Southern California Association of Governments, and the California Air Resources Board collaboratively have completed the difficult work of developing a plan to achieve the federal health-based PM2.5 and ozone standards. The hard work of these three agencies has resulted in a State Implementation Plan built around the most innovative and aggressive tools available to us at the state and local level. These strategies include new controls for off-road construction equipment, controls on commercial cooking and they encompass such aggressive efforts as the Los Angeles and Long Beach Ports' Clean Air Action Plan.

However, the plan to meet the ozone standard includes 200 tons per day of NOx for which the region cannot yet identify specific control measures. Additional reductions will be necessary for other upcoming federal standards.

Making the challenge even more daunting is the fact that a substantial portion of the PM2.5 and ozone emissions are associated with the goods movement

system and these sources are predominantly under federal jurisdiction. And this underscores the reason why we really are here:

We need the federal government in conjunction with state and local partners to attain federal air quality standards in every area of the United States, particularly addressing locomotives, aircraft and marine vessels emissions. I want to thank you Madame Chair for your leadership in introducing legislation to control pollution from marine vessels — the largest unregulated source of pollution.

Let me highlight three ways Congress could contribute to our clean air needs:

- First, and most urgently, Congress must push U.S. EPA to greatly strengthen its proposed locomotive rule so that benefits will occur in time for this region to meet federal clean air deadlines.
- Congress and the Administration must help our region to expedite turnover of the dirty diesel fleet, whether through enhanced funding of the West Coast Collaborative or other funding incentives, including

procurement considerations, tax breaks, or other mechanisms.

- Congress should commit to fund zero and near-zero emission transportation systems.
- Finally, Congress must address emissions from marine vessels entering U.S. ports, and should work with neighboring countries to seek standards commensurate with those of this nation.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to speak to you today, and thank you for recognizing the seriousness of the situation by holding today's hearing. I would be happy to answer any questions. Thank you.