

AAPA 2020 Communications Award Submission

California Ports Day 2019 & 2020

Submission by Cam Spencer, CA Ports Day Chair on behalf of the California Association of Port Authorities

Category 1 – Special Events



Event Summary: The California Association of Port Authorities represents the 11 public ports in the state, and collectively focuses on educating state and federal policy makers on port operations while also advocating in the best interests of the maritime community.

In February of 2018, CAPA hosted California’s first-ever statewide Ports Day, to highlight the contributions that California’s 11 public ports bring to the state’s economy and environmental leadership. As the entry guidelines limit the recognition to 24 months prior to June 2020, this application focuses on the CA Ports Days held in February of 2019 and 2020.

California Ports Day was birthed out of a need to reintroduce state legislators and policymakers to the collective benefits and prosperity brought to the state by its seaports. Hosted at the State Capitol in Sacramento, the official day is marked by Assembly Concurrent Resolution establishing CA Ports Day as the third Wednesday of February each year. With a dual focus on showing our physical presence at the Capitol and educating state legislators and their staffs on key issues facing our ports, this day has been marked with a variety of events including:

- An interactive tent highlighting the goods imported and exported through the Ports at the Capitol’s front entrance (educating everyone entering or leaving that day)
- Meetings with over 50+ legislators and their key staff members
- An official legislative hearing hosted by the Assembly Ports and Goods Movement Caucus
- A reception hosted for networking with members of the ports and legislature to connect in a casual setting



1. What are/were the entry's specific communications challenges or opportunities?

CA Ports Day was created to address the messaging challenges the state's ports had been experiencing over the past decade. Much of the state legislature had been lobbied by the Environmental lobbyists and had a negative view of the state's ports as polluters. There appeared to be a lack of recognition of the leadership and investments the ports were making in the environmental arena. This day was also created to remind legislators of how many jobs the state's ports sustain, 5 million. One third of the state's economy relies on goods moving through California's seaports. Many of the state's elected legislators had lost sight of those impressive figures, this day was to remind them. California is a very large state, and this day also served as a way to bring leadership and staff from all 11 ports to the state Capitol on the same day, joining forces, building comradery, and showing a united front to the detrimental policies that were coming out of the state legislature.

Throughout the day, there were opportunities to make personal connections with many new legislators, targeting those who were not on the Ports and Goods Movement Caucus, to educate them on how their district is connect to and reliant on the state's seaports. We are also able to leave behind a flash drive with and info video and digital flyers.

Links: Economic Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O8ZxZTI4eZU>

Environmental Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c8cXa1fXLXQ&t=128s>

2. How does the communication used in this entry map back to the organization's overall mission?

CAPA's overall mission is "educating state and federal policy makers on port operations while also advocating in the best interests of the maritime community." This mission is what drove the creation of the California Ports Day. The day was aimed to educate the state's policy makers on how the ports are operating as the greenest system of ports in the world, and are the backbone of the state's economy, supporting 1/3 of the state's economy. This day was also focused on establishing ongoing relationships with new legislators, introducing them to our state's ports, even if those are outside of their elected district.

3. What were the communications planning and programming components used for this entry?

The audience of the day was two-fold:

1. Elected state legislators in both the State Assembly and State Senate
2. Elected officials from the State's Executive Branch/Heads of State Agencies

The goals for the day were to raise awareness of the state's legislators and elected officials of the great progress we are making toward cleaner and greener port operations, the large amount of jobs the ports provide to the state and those living in the elected official's districts. We also wanted to meet with new legislators not familiar with ports, to change the negative narrative they may have been hearing from environmental groups. Our measurable milestones

included meeting with over 50 legislators, meeting with at least 25 new legislators not on the Ports and Goods Movement Caucus, and drawing the attention of the state's executive branch/cabinet and state agency heads like the Cal EPA Secretary.

4. What actions were taken and what communication outputs were employed in this entry?

Our tactics to achieve these measurables were to schedule targeted meetings with the state Assembly and Senate members well in advance, splitting our port staff's and leadership into teams of 3-4 people to go meet with 5 of those legislators that day. We also hosted a Legislative Hearing and a briefing that we invited the staff members of entire state Assembly and Senate to, which was attended by about 30 of them. This gave them two options to meet with us, and learn about our challenges and achievements. We also wanted to draw attention to Ports Day visually, so we had a tent showcasing the imports and exports that our 11 ports handle, banners put up at the entrance to the State Capitol so all those entering or leaving would see it was Ports Day, and we wore blue shirts with "Ports Day" across the front, gave out buttons and also gave lapel pins as leave behinds with the legislators to wear when voting on Port issues.

5. What were the communications outcomes from this entry and what evaluation methods were used to assess them?

One anecdote is from one of our greatest agitators, the California Air Resources Board – Cal EPA. They have been putting together very aggressive new regulations that will cost our ports financially and cause possible cargo diversion to other states. We have been able to use CA Ports Day as a way to invite them to the briefings/hearings and even to the interactive tent at the front of the Capitol to see what it is we actually do. This made an impact, as the head of the California EPA (Secretary Jared Blumenfeld) and his staff came to a briefing of ours on Ports Day (pic below), and we were able to interact with them in a way that educated them on all the great work we are already doing, and on how vital the jobs we provide are to the state's economic outlook. This changed their posture to be more collaborative with us, and has resulted in them actually making visits to our ports and being more open to alternative solutions throughout the rule-making process.

We have also seen more receptiveness by elected legislators and the Governor's Office of Economic Development (GoBiz) on going to bat for us against certain regulations hurting our customers and industry.



In addition to various agency heads, CA Ports Day grabbed the attention of three of the state's top elected officials, State Lieutenant Governor Eleni Kounalakis, State Treasurer Fiona Ma, and State Controller Betty Yee. All three participated in the day in some way, whether delivering a keynote speech, meeting with us, or attending the Ports Day Reception.

We were also able to get a word from the State's Governor, Gavin Newsom on the importance of Ports and the upcoming Ports Day at the airport as he was unable to attend:

<https://twitter.com/portofhueneme/status/1103510020954632192>

After each CA Ports Day, we have a debrief session with the planning committee to review wins and challenges for each year, and how to improve. For example, in 2019 we focused on more visual materials including flyers etc., whereas in 2020, we focused more on getting more meetings with top agency officials and put our flyers/video links onto a flash drive and QR code (we were showcasing our environmental stewardship after all).

The day drew attention and recognition from various elected officials across the state through social media (see below).



Fiona Ma, CPA ✓ @fionama · Feb 19

It's **Ports Day** in Sacramento. They are one of the largest economic engines in CA and leading on cutting-age enviro stewardship. @Lenny_Mendonca/ @CAGoBiz spoke first; @jaredblumenfeld has done many port tours. @portofhueneme @PortofOakland @PortofLA @portofsandiego @portoflongbeach



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GO-Biz ✓ @CAGoBiz · Feb 19

Happy **Ports Day**! Today @Lenny_Mendonca was honored to participate in a conversation with representatives from California's 11 ports to discuss sustainable freight and goods movement. #InternationalCA





Assemblymember Monique Limón ✓

Celebrating #PortsDay with The Port of Hueneme! Did you know that the Port of Hueneme has an overall economic impact of \$1.5 billion and has supports 13,600 direct and indirect jobs, all while developing environmentally-friendly operations and employing the latest technology to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Just a few of the reasons why our ports serve a vital role for the state of California



Patrick O'Donnell ✓ @AsmPatODonnell · Feb 19

California's ports support over half a million direct jobs while pumping over \$9 billion into our local communities. Thank you to all who work in the freight sector, supply chain and logistics industries for making green while going green. #CAPortsDay





Sharon Quirk-Silva is at California State Capitol.

February 21



It's #CAPortsDay! As Chair of the Jobs Committee, a system responsible for one-third of the state's economy and jobs.

Everyday goods are imported through our ports; like cars, televisions, bicycles, computers, cell phones, and more!

Thank you to all those that participated throughout the day: **Port of Los Angeles, Port of San Diego, The Port of San Francisco, Port of Long Beach, Port of Oakland, The Port of Hueneme, Port of Redwood City, Port of Richmond (California), Port ...** See More



The Port of Hueneme

2K like this · Port

Feb 19 · More from #CAPortsDay From Senator Lena A. Gonzalez: "As Chair of the Senate Select Committee on Ports & Goods Movement and State Senator representing the Port of Long Beach, as well as many Gateway Cities along the 710 freeway, it was an honor to join my...





NOAA Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary

10K like this · Government Organization

Happy #CAPortsDay! #DYK the Port of Los Angeles & Port of Long Beach are the busiest ports in the #US? The Port's Green Flag Incentive Program is a voluntary vessel speed reduction program (similar to ours) that reduces smog-forming emissions & diesel, reduces...



Port of Redwood City

772 like this · Port

Feb 19 · ...but also connecting California with the rest of the world. #CAPortsDay



Port of Los Angeles

@PortofLA · Feb 19 Today, port leaders are in Sacramento celebrating #CAPortsDay, along with #PortofLA Executive Director Gene Seroka, Chair of @californiaports. Thank you @AsmPatODonnell and @SenGonzalez_33 for honoring California's 11 ports with a resolution. @portoflongbeach



California Ports

@californiaports · Feb 21 On CA Ports Day this week, CAPA members discussed with legislators and the @CAGovernor administration the economic importance of the state's 11 ports, their innovative spirit in the face of challenges to global trade, and their environmental stewardship.



CAPA Ports Day Sacramento 2020
Members of the California Association of Port Authorities marked California Ports Day by meeting ...
[youtube.com](#)