

## **Improving Air Quality in Port Communities**

### **Federal Action Should Support Voluntary Efforts at U.S. Ports**

Air quality issues are receiving increasing attention at U.S. ports as international trade continues to grow. As larger vessels enter U.S. waters bringing more cargo, ports must expand their landside operations to accommodate this growth. As landside infrastructure expands, truck and rail traffic to and from U.S. ports also increases. While this increased trade yields tremendous economic benefits for the port community, as well as local, state and federal governments, it can impact air quality in and around port communities if the growth is not carefully planned and/or mitigated.

Air quality issues are particularly relevant for more than thirty U.S. ports that operate in counties currently designated as “non-attainment” or “maintenance” for one or more of the national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS). The NAAQS mandate levels of particulate matter (PM) and ozone that are acceptable for public health and the environment, and counties that do not achieve these standards must take action to reduce air emissions.

Diesel engines often contribute to poor air quality, as older engines and dirtier fuels emit high levels of PM and oxides of nitrogen (NO<sub>x</sub>), which is a precursor to ozone. In and around ports, equipment operating diesel engines includes cargo-handling equipment, trucks, locomotives, tugboats, ferries, and ships.

While the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has set standards for new on-road and off-road diesel engines, voluntary action is needed to address emissions from existing engines (often

referred to as “legacy” engines). U.S. ports are demonstrating tremendous leadership on voluntarily reducing air emissions by retrofitting cargo-handling equipment, using cleaner fuels (such as emulsified diesel and biodiesel) and making operational changes to reduce truck idling and improve efficiency. However, federal support is needed for these voluntary port efforts, and international action is needed to address emissions from oceangoing vessels.

#### **Implementation of MARPOL Annex VI**

AAPA supports U.S. implementation of MARPOL Annex VI, an international treaty that will set standards for diesel engines on international oceangoing vessels. Currently, the engines on these ships burn some of the highest sulfur-content fuel available, known as bunker fuel. Emissions from vessels can be significant contributors to NAAQS non-attainment status, and international action is one appropriate response to addressing emissions from oceangoing cargo vessels.

Annex VI was proposed in 1997 and has been ratified by a sufficient number of states in the International Maritime Organization (IMO). The treaty entered into effect in May 2005, though the United States has not yet become party to the treaty. The Senate gave its advice and consent to ratification of the treaty, but Congress needs to approve implementing legislation before the treaty can be in force in the United States. AAPA supports passage of legislation to implement Annex VI by Congress in 2008.

In addition to setting standards for oxides of sulfur (SO<sub>x</sub>) and NO<sub>x</sub> emissions, Annex VI contains provisions allowing for special SO<sub>x</sub> Emission Control Areas (SECAs) to be established with more stringent controls on sulfur emissions.

AAPA also supports the U.S. proposal to the IMO to make MARPOL Annex VI more stringent. The proposal would set emission limits for particulate matter, oxides of sulfur, and oxides of nitrogen.

### **Fully Funding the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act of 2005**

AAPA urges Congress to fully fund the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act of 2005, which was signed into law as part of the Energy Policy Act of 2005. This law authorizes \$200 million annually to fund diesel emissions reduction projects at the federal and state levels. For the FY'09 budget, AAPA and other industry groups supportive of DERA urge Congress to provide \$70 million for the program.

### **Encouraging Voluntary Action Tied To Sustainability**

At its 2007 Annual Convention, AAPA approved a resolution that encourages sustainability as a standard business practice for ports. As ports adopt sustainability – the balancing of economic, environmental and social concerns – they will continue to take voluntary actions to reduce air emissions in a cost-effective way that yields environmental benefits and benefits to the community.

Many ports also continue to implement or expand Environmental Management Systems (EMS's), which use a process-based approach to manage for and reduce environmental risks. In 2008, AAPA will launch its third round of the Port EMS Assistance Project, which has aided nearly a dozen port authorities in the creation and implementation of EMS's since its inception in 2004.

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