



ALAMEDA COUNTY HEALTH CARE SERVICES AGENCY
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

David J. Kears, Director
Anthony Iton, Director & Health Officer

1000 Broadway, 5th Floor
Oakland, CA 94607

(510) 267-8000
(510) 267-3223

October 2, 2008

Mayor Ron V. Dellums
City of Oakland
Office of the Mayor
1 Frank Ogawa Plaza
3rd Floor
Oakland, CA 94612

RE: Port of Oakland Maritime Air Quality Improvement Plan

Dear Mayor Dellums,

The residents of the City of Oakland and Alameda County are fortunate that the Charter of the City of Oakland vests the Board of Port Commissioners, a board nominated by the mayor and appointed by Oakland City Council, with exclusive control and management of the Port Department. Strong public oversight should help to protect the health and welfare interests of all residents of Oakland. To ensure that “The Port of Oakland Maritime Air Quality Improvement Plan (MAQIP)” is the best possible plan for reducing illness-causing air pollution and improving the health of Oakland residents who live near the Port of Oakland, I am writing to you to seek your leadership and support in making sure that the concerns and comments submitted by the many agencies and community groups represented on the Maritime Air Quality Improvement Plan (MAQIP) are explicitly and thoroughly addressed in the final version of this air quality improvement plan. Your leadership on this issue can help to set a standard for clean, healthy, efficient, inclusive and responsible port operations for a world increasingly dominated by trade and goods movement.

As you know, the public health crisis confronting West Oakland is severe: residents living in the shadow of the Port of Oakland can expect to die, on average, more than a decade before residents of the Oakland Hills and that, appallingly, this gap may be increasing. It is clear that one of the underlying causes of this disturbingly large health disparity is the extremely high rates of environmentally-linked disease in West Oakland. People living in West Oakland breathe in 3 times more diesel particles than other Bay Area residents. As a result of the exposure, West Oakland residents experience high rates of diseases such as cancer and asthma, particularly chronic childhood asthma. As demonstrated in the West Oakland Health Risk Assessment, West Oakland residents experience 2.5 times greater lifetime risk of cancer than Bay Area residents in general and 80% of this excess cancer risk is attributed to diesel trucks. These residents have the highest rates of asthma hospitalization in the county – 2.3 times the average – and West Oakland children under five years of age have emergency department visits rates due to asthma nearly three times the county average.

The concentration of environmental hazards in West Oakland is particularly devastating to residents' health because of their social vulnerability. Due to high poverty levels and the prevalence of other psycho-social stressors, as well as a lack of access to healthcare, West Oakland residents are already at risk for poor health outcomes. There is increased recognition that multiple hazards can have a cumulative impact on residents. While the Port of Oakland is not the only source of air pollution in West Oakland, Port actions can either exacerbate or mediate these existing conditions. In order to mitigate these multiple assaults to West Oakland residents' health, we must maximize the health promoting potential of every decision impacting the community and encourage the Port of Oakland, who should be commended for initiating an air improvement plan, to take a leadership position on improving air quality rather than merely trying to achieve a minimum standard.

After reviewing the comments of agencies and community groups participating in the MAQIP process, there appears to be broad agreement that the three points (listed below) must be addressed in the revised plan. We have discussed this with representatives from CARB, EPA and BAAQMD, and we feel by adding a brief, few pages to the Plan specifically addressing these issues concerns can be adequately addressed.

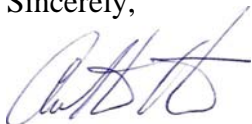
1. The plan must reflect a firm commitment by the Port of Oakland to specific, concrete steps to achieve the 85% reduction in community health risk related to exposure to diesel particulate matter emissions from the Port's maritime operations by no later than January 1, 2020. The Port of Oakland has acted as a leader in stating this goal, but clear, concrete actions along with observable milestones, timelines, and budgets for each measure are necessary to make this achievable.
2. The plan should include a strong commitment by the Port to identify, investigate, evaluate, and where possible and appropriate, adopt potentially feasible strategies for air quality improvements in conjunction with other agencies.
3. The plan must include quantification (measurement) of net emissions and reductions from the concrete actions included in the plan.

We seek your assistance in directing the Port of Oakland to meet with the MAQIP Interagency Workgroup to discuss the comments and changes made to the draft plan before the plan is sent back to the MAQIP Task Force for final consideration. The Interagency Workgroup is comprised of representatives from California Air Resources Board, Bay Area Air Quality Management District, Environmental Protection Agency, City of Oakland and County Public Health, Environmental Health and County Supervisor Carson and Miley's offices. The group was formed out of the MAQIP Task Force to discuss the roles of our respective agencies, problem-solve and identify ways we can leverage our resources to ensure cleaner air and improved health outcomes for West Oakland residents.

We all share your goal of an economically vibrant Port of Oakland committed to improving air quality and the health of residents and workers alike. We feel that a world-class Maritime Air Quality Improvement Plan provides a key opportunity to reach this goal. We greatly appreciate the help your leadership can provide in achieving this goal.

Please let me know if you have any questions about our concerns.

Sincerely,



Anthony Iton, M.D., J.D., M.P.H
Director and Health Officer

cc:

MAQIP Interagency Workgroup:

Richard Sinkoff, Port of Oakland

Anne Whittington, Port of Oakland

Miguel Bustos, Office of the Mayor

Steve Lautze, City of Oakland, CEDA

Cynthia Marvin, CARB

Carolyn Suer, CARB

Jean Roggenkamp, BAAQMD

Michael Murphy, BAAQMD

Amy Zimpfer, USEPA

Mike Bandrowski, USEPA

Richard Grow, USEPA

Sandra Witt, AC Public Health Department

Pam Evans, AC Environmental Health Department

Supervisor Keith Carson and Amy De Reyes, aide

Supervisor Nate Miley and Robyn Hodges, aide

MAQIP Co-chairs:

Omar Benjamin, Port of Oakland

Jack Broadbent, BAAQMD

Brian Beveridge, West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project

Andy Garcia, GSC Logistics