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ENVIRONMENTAL EXPERTS FROM THE PORTS OF LONG BEACH AND LOS ANGELES AND AQUARIUM ADDRESS NEW AIR POLLUTION REGULATIONS

January 22, 2015, Long Beach, CA—The ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach are the two busiest container ports in the nation, together accounting for 43 percent of the country’s imports. Ships entering these ports are now subject to new regulations aimed at improving air quality. In a live webcast held yesterday at the Aquarium of the Pacific, officials from the Port of Long Beach (POLB) and the Port of Los Angeles (POLA) discussed the new rules under annex VI of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), which went into effect at the start of this month.

Rick Cameron, Port of Long Beach managing director of planning and environmental affairs; Chris Cannon, Port of Los Angeles director of environmental management; and Aquarium President and CEO Dr. Jerry R. Schubel talked about what the ports have done to reduce negative impact on the environment, including improving air quality, and reducing maritime impacts on marine wildlife.

The new regulation set by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) increases the area of coverage for compliance by vessels from 24 to 200 nautical miles from the coast. Vessels within 200 nautical miles must now slow down to a speed of 12 knots (previously 20 knots) and must adhere to stricter fuel standards to reduce sulfur oxide and other harmful emissions contributing to poor air quality and climate change. In his remarks Cannon emphasized the benefit to migrating whales—slower vessel speeds reduce whale strikes.

Both ports have made significant strides in developing programs and policies to improve air quality, reduce water pollution, and lessen impact of port operations on wildlife, remarked Schubel. Ten years ago the Port of Long Beach Board of Harbor Commissioners adopted a Green Port Policy, which provides guidelines for reducing negative impacts of port operations. POLB has also developed a Clean Air Action Plan in collaboration with the POLA and the California Air Resources Board, United States Environmental Protection Agency, and South Coast Air Quality Management District. Programs developed under this plan, like the clean trucks programs at each port, have cut emissions from sources within the port complex by 80 to 90 percent, Cameron said.

Both ports have also implemented a Water Resources Action Plan to improve water quality in and around the port complex, Cannon said. Also, in 2004 both ports began requiring ships docked within the port complex to run on shore-side auxiliary electric power to reduce emissions. This rule later became a state regulation, Cannon said. Cameron and Cannon both looked to the future in their remarks, stating that cleaner, more energy-efficient technologies will be incorporated into port operations in coming years. Cannon said POLA will be looking to reduce reliance on combustion-based fuels and has already added hybrid tugboats to its fleet.

“Both ports have set a good example of environmental stewardship with the non-regulatory efforts they have made,” Schubel said. “Vast improvements to air quality, water quality, and local wildlife habitats have been made in recent decades. The port complex is now home to diverse and abundant marine wildlife, from fish and sea lions to seabirds. This is an example of humans and wildlife coexisting in harmony.” Visitors to the Aquarium of the Pacific can learn more about the ports and shipping daily in the Ocean Science Center by watching the program *A Working Waterfront: Ports of San Pedro Bay*. This show is available to more than 100 institutions around the world through NOAA’s Science on a Sphere (SOS) Network with a capacity to reach over 50 million people. The Aquarium creates SOS programming about environmental issues from extreme weather to sea level rise to share with its 1.5 million visitors and globally through the SOS Network. The webcast with the port executives is also available for viewing on the Aquarium’s website. For more information, visit aquariumofthepacific.org or call 562-590-3100.



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