

July 16, 2004

To: Board Members of the Los Angeles Harbor Commission

Dear Commissioner:

I am writing to express the support of the Waterfront Coalition for the Los Angeles Board of Harbor Commissioners' Draft Rail Policy. The Draft Rail Policy represents a step in the right direction for promoting the greater use of railroad movement through the port of Los Angeles and the sister port of Long Beach.

By way of background, the Waterfront Coalition is a group of concerned business interests representing cargo owners and others in the transportation supply chain committed to promote the most efficient, secure and technologically advanced ports for the twenty-first century. Members of the Waterfront Coalition are collectively responsible for shipping and transporting a substantial number of containerized goods through the port of Los Angeles annually. The Waterfront Coalition has long recognized the need to develop a port-wide plan to ease harbor truck congestion and support the greater use of rail infrastructure.

The Draft Rail Policy represents a responsible and proactive approach to supporting efficient goods movement while increasing air quality in San Pedro Bay. Given the expected surge in cargo volumes through the region in the coming decade, having a plan to increase rail capacity both on-dock and near-dock is not only wise it is necessary. Currently, half of containerized imports move through the port via trucks, which add to road congestion and contribute to air pollution within the region. Even with an expansion of truck and road infrastructure, growth at the port will ensure that congestion remains a top operational issue. This is why it is imperative to have a plan that will take container traffic off the highways.

For this reason, we strongly urge the Commission to adopt this policy, which will help you in assessing the relative merits of land use decisions on port property. Developing more on- and near- dock rail on port lands represents a prime opportunity to expand and promote rail infrastructure. Furthermore, the Draft Rail Policy that promotes the greater use of rail will help increase air quality in the San Pedro Bay area by replacing truck trips with rail trips, even for some inter-modal cargo.

For all these reasons, the Waterfront Coalition supports the Commission's Draft Rail Policy which will help the Los Angeles port complex retain its market position while simultaneously improving efficiency, and reducing congestion.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me at (202) 861-0825.

Sincerely,

Robin Lanier
Executive Director