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Waterfront Coalition Offers Framework for Industry Action that will Open Off-Hour Truck Gates at the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach

-- Group Calls on Terminal Operators to File a Tariff with the Federal Maritime Commission--

[April 8, 2004 – Washington, DC] – The Waterfront Coalition today released a position paper that provides a framework for the opening of off-hour truck gates in the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach. The paper calls on marine terminal operators to use existing Federal Maritime Commission (FMC) discussion agreement authority to develop port-wide, coordinated, full service off-hour gates and to file a tariff with the FMC that would fund the incremental costs for these gates through a privately imposed fee on shippers who pick up cargo during daytime hours.

"The framework position is a breakthrough for stakeholders on the waterfront," said Jonathan Gold, Vice President of the Retail Industry Leaders Association and chairman of the committee that developed the position paper. "In effect, the cargo owners represented by the Coalition have, with this paper, made it clear that they support off-hour gates and are willing, under certain circumstances, to pay for them," he said.

The group's paper outlines several requirements for the imposition of private day-use fees. In return for support of a private fee, the coalition has asked terminal operators to issue quarterly reports publicly stating the incremental costs of off-hour gates, the amount of revenue generated by day-use fees, and the amount of cargo moved during regular hours and off-hours. The organization has also requested public audits on an annual basis of these costs. Finally, the group has insisted upon a clearly defined sunset for the fee, when cargo volumes moved at night reach 40% of the total.

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"We sincerely hope that this position will move the industry forward in finding a solution to congestion issues," said Robin Lanier, Executive Director of the group. "The Waterfront Coalition has supported the opening of off-hour gates in the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach for more than two years. We have long believed that an industry solution to this issue is far preferable to government solutions that will impose non-transparent fees and taxes, will never sunset, and are unlikely to cover terminals' incremental costs," she said.

The group has outlined several important activities for state agencies, however, including reports on the impact of off-hour gates on congestion in the road arteries serving the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach. In addition, the group has called upon the state to consider ways and means of educating the shipper population about the benefits -- both to business and the community -- of moving cargo during nights and weekends.

Copies of the Coalition's full written position paper are available on the Waterfront Coalition's webpage, located at www.portmod.org.

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The Waterfront Coalition is a group of concerned business interests representing shippers (importers and exporters), transportation providers, and others in the transportation supply chain committed to educating policy makers and the public about the economic importance of U.S. ports and foreign trade, and to promote the most efficient and technologically advanced ports for the twenty-first century.