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Port Air Emissions Continue to Decline

Marine terminal and ocean carrier investment in emission reduction equipment and technology and operational changes are improving air quality in Southern California. When compared to a 2005 baseline year, air emissions at the Port of Long Beach experienced steep and dramatic declines. Whether for ocean-going vessels, cargo handling equipment or trucks, emissions are down 90% or more for diesel particulate matter. There are equally remarkable declines for other emission categories.

“The impressive reduction in port related emissions is a combination of a variety of factors,” stated Thomas Jelenić, Vice President of the Pacific Merchant Shipping Association. “Voluntary vessel speed reduction programs, use of low sulfur marine fuels, use of shore power for vessels while at berth coupled with the use of cleaner and more technology advanced fuel efficient vessels and marine terminal equipment have all played a role in reducing emissions.”

The emission reductions since 2005 have occurred during a time period in which the total number of containers moving through the Port of Long Beach has gone up 21% while overall containership arrivals have declined 25%, indicating the maritime industry’s use of larger vessels.

“The reduction in port related emissions is a success story involving the commitment, partnership and resources of the Port and its tenants and customers,” according to Jelenić. “However, it has not been without its challenges – as increased costs of operation has contributed to reducing California’s market share of U.S. bound cargo. To guard against additional market share loss, California will need to encourage the use of innovative technology and provide policies that keep California ports competitive.

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About the Pacific Merchant Shipping Association (PMSA)

The Pacific Merchant Shipping Association (PMSA) is an independent, not-for-profit association focused on global trade. PMSA operates offices in Oakland, Long Beach and Seattle, and represents owners and operators of marine terminals and U.S. and foreign vessels operating throughout the world.