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## **Environmental, Labor and Church Groups Thank Seattle City Council Members Letter to Congress Urges Closing Loophole to Protect Public Health and Safety**

**Seattle, WA** - Environmental, labor and church groups are thanking Seattle City Council Members Richard Conlin, Sally Clark, Jean Godden, Nick Licata, Tom Rasmussen, and Mike O'Brien for sending a letter to Congress urging a federal fix to the trucking problems facing the Port of Seattle.

The City Council members' letter urges the state's congressional delegation to support federal legislation clarifying the nation's ports' legal authority to set environmental, safety, and labor standards for unsafe, polluting diesel trucks operating at docks around the country.

"Our domestic maritime ports should have the ability to increase efficiency and competitiveness, protect public health and safety and ensure a stable and secure work force," says the letter sent to all of Washington's members of Congress today. Seattle Mayor Mike McGinn [sent a similar letter](#) of support earlier this year.

The city council member letter is generating praise and thanks from an unusual coalition of environmental, labor and community groups.

"The Port of Seattle has claimed for years that this federal loophole restricts their options for protecting Seattle's neighborhoods from polluting trucks," said Brady Montz, Chair of the Seattle Group of the Sierra Club. "We thank these city council members for leading the way by asking Congress for what we need to protect Seattle's communities from the serious health and safety hazards caused by port trucking operations."

The Port of Los Angeles recently implemented a comprehensive clean truck program that provides incentives to trucking companies to invest in green fleets. The American Trucking Association (ATA) won a federal court [injunction](#) in a pending case against essential features of the program citing an arcane statute that exempts trucking from necessary port regulations that could reduce emissions from heavy duty rigs by 80 percent.

"Seattle's economic future depends on an efficient, reliable, green port," said Rick Hicks, Secretary-Treasurer of Teamsters Local 174. "We welcome the efforts of our city council members who are seeking the tools to address the 30-year old underground economy known as port trucking."

The ATA's lawsuit has left contract truck drivers, who average \$10-11 an hour, in charge

of replacing and maintaining our nation's 100,000 port trucks, 95 percent of which fail to meet U.S. EPA emissions standards. Congress is now considering [closing the legal loophole](#) in federal motor carrier statutes that the ATA is relying on, at the formal urging of the Port of Los Angeles, Port of Oakland, and Port Authority of New York & New Jersey.

"We're so pleased our city council members recognize the social justice issues caused by the port's trucking problems," said Monica Corsaro, Director of Social Justice Ministries at the Church Council of Greater Seattle. "Our lower income neighborhoods and the truck drivers themselves are suffering the impacts and our city council is looking for solutions."

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