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Case Study of the San Pedro Bay Ports' Clean Air Action Plan (CAAP)

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND LEVERS OF COMMUNITY INFLUENCE

About the Case Study

The Clean Air Action Plan (CAAP) at the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, collectively known as the San Pedro Bay Ports (SPBP), is a groundbreaking program. The *Case Study of the San Pedro Bay Ports' Clean Air Action Plan 2006-2018* provides a summary of the CAAP's background and history followed by three focused discussions on environmental justice and levers of community influence; technologies and practices for development and deployment; and the 2017 Clean Truck Program. Best practices and lessons learned presented in the case study include the importance of community-port collaboration, conducting emission inventories, setting quantified emissions targets, and supporting technical innovations; and developing partnerships with industry and government.

Air Quality in Near-Port Communities

Overburdened communities near the SPBP have borne the most direct air quality impacts of port operations. However, as part of the broader environmental justice movement, these communities have deployed numerous strategies that compelled the development of the CAAP and influenced its subsequent cycles of implementation and revision. These community strategies laid the groundwork for community involvement processes that can be models for port authorities and agencies, as well as near-port communities, across the country.

Environmental justice (EJ) is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

See EPA's [Plan EJ 2014](#) report to learn more.

Lessons Learned for Communities

Communities in Southern California successfully drew attention to their concerns and accelerated the development and implementation of the CAAP. Community activists not only participated in environmental agency deliberations, but also cultivated relationships with local elected officials to elevate port air quality issues to city, county, and state political discussions. They also formed alliances with mainstream environmental organizations, thereby gaining access to considerable technical and legal resources. Moreover, near-port communities played a key role in filing a lawsuit against the Port of Los Angeles (POLA) that threatened to bring port expansion to a halt.

Communities can:

- Build relationships with local policymakers, environmental NGOs, labor organizations, and port staff.
- Form alliances with other communities to elevate common issues and amplify environmental justice perspectives on ports and freight movement nationwide.
- Organize in-person events (e.g., toxic tours) to help government decision-makers, agency staff, and other interested parties understand local health concerns and experience environmental conditions firsthand.
- Consider legal action as a potential avenue if communicating with a port is unproductive over time. Communities outside of California must identify appropriate legal frameworks within their own regions if they want to pursue legal remedies for unresolved port violations. While litigation has the potential to create change, it may also exacerbate adversarial relationships and cost more time and money than other strategies, so communities should carefully consider lawsuits from several perspectives.

The full case study is on the [EPA Ports Initiative website](#).
For more information on the case study, contact talkaboutports@epa.gov.

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Lessons Learned for Ports

Ongoing community representation in CAAP planning and implementation processes is crucial. In response to community feedback, the 2017 CAAP Update requires periodic stakeholder advisory meetings as a component of plan implementation, an improvement that will facilitate consistent, ongoing community engagement. Under immense pressure to produce meaningful and politically viable air quality improvements, SPBP staff and leadership have moved toward institutionalized community involvement, which has enabled productive discussions as CAAP implementation continues.

Increased community involvement has also supported the Ports' environmental efforts. Funding and incentives are a major need, given the high costs of developing, demonstrating, and implementing new freight technologies. Community groups within the South Coast Air Basin have supported joint advocacy efforts with state and federal agencies to develop legislation that would advance zero-emission equipment certification and shore power, for example. Moreover, many community groups have written letters of support for the Ports on funding applications, which has been critical in bringing grant dollars to San Pedro Bay.

Ports can:

- Make participation easier for community members by holding public meetings in locations that are accessible to community members (ideally by public transportation); at workable hours of the day; and with adequate translation, food, notetaking, and other infrastructure.
- Formalize community representation by writing processes for stakeholder engagement into the CAAP.
- Work with communities to support joint advocacy efforts to develop legislation that would advance port environmental goals.

Additional Resources

The [EPA Ports Initiative](#) has a number of resources for community-port collaboration including the following.

- [Community-Port Collaboration Toolkit](#)
- [Training Modules and Additional Resources](#)
- [Community-Port Pilot Project Case Studies](#)

