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## Villaraigosa approves Clean Trucks Program

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Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa on Thursday signed the controversial Clean Trucks Program, which aims to reduce big rig diesel emissions by 80 percent within five years.

Beginning Oct. 1, trucks built before 1989 will be banned from the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach. By 2012, all trucks entering the twin ports will be required to meet 2007 vehicle emissions standards.

The \$1.6 billion truck replacement program will be funded by a \$35 cargo fee, which went into effect on June 1.

The Clean Trucks Program is part of the larger Clean Air Action Plan, adopted two years ago by the Los Angeles and Long Beach harbor commissions with a goal to reduce all port-related emissions by 45percent by 2012.

About 1,200 deaths annually across the region are attributed to port pollution, according to the California Air Resource Board.

"When 1,200 lives are cut short every year by toxic emissions coming from the port, we have a moral mandate to act fast and effectively," Villaraigosa said. "That is why I am signing into

law the cornerstone segment of the world's most comprehensive, sustainable plan to clean up a major port."

The program also requires nearly 17,000 short-haul truck drivers entering the Port of Los Angeles to become employees of licensed motor carriers by the end of 2013.

That element of the program is opposed by the American Trucking Association, which plans to file a lawsuit against the city sometime next month.

Opponents claim that the new mandate will violate federal free trade laws by banning independent owner-operator truck drivers from the port. The plan also unfairly favors large-scale licensed motor carriers to hire the drivers as employees, which will drive smaller carriers out of business, according to Curtis Whalen of the American Trucking Association.

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