



Contact:

Eric Moses
Consensus Planning Group, Inc.
(213) 438-1755

Trade Experts Highlight Need for Green Growth at Ports

Infrastructure at and near the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach must be in place to handle the anticipated tripling of trade volume, mostly from Asia

Torrance , CA (Nov. 15, 2007) – Three trade experts, including former U.S. Trade Representative Mickey Kantor, today urged the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach to focus on long-term trade growth when assessing its infrastructure needs to handle the anticipated tripling of cargo over the next 20 years.

“The ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach can grow green but they must grow to avoid gridlock on the goods movement supply chain,” Kantor said at a panel discussion sponsored by FuturePorts, an organization dedicated to resolving port, industry and community concerns. “The reality is that trade with Asia is going to increase exponentially and the ports need to begin preparing immediately.”

Regional economist John Husing of Economics & Politics, Inc., who is an expert on goods movement supply chain and the impact of trade on Southern California, and Paul Bingham of Global Insight Inc., an expert in long-term cargo demand forecasts for the Long Beach and Los Angeles ports, joined Kantor on the panel.

FuturePorts brings together business, community and government leaders to focus on solving goods movement problems using a multi-stakeholder and regional perspective on the ports and shipping supply chain.

FuturePorts Executive Director Elizabeth Warren noted the ports and industries face a number of growth-related challenges, including: congestion at the ports, delays in approving construction of necessary corridor and port facilities, area residents concerned about port activities and meeting environmental challenges, including the implementation of new technologies to improve air quality.

“The problems associated with growth are having a deleterious effect on the capability of the ports and industries to sustain their critical function as economic engines in the state of California and the nation,” Warren said. “We must meet the ports’ environmental challenges. But to do this, it is essential that we build needed marine and landside shipping facilities and improve our transportation corridors.”

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As the two largest ports in the United States, the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach generate \$200 billion annually and handle 43 percent of all waterborne U. S. trade and 60 percent of all imports from Asia. The ports handled 15.7 million twenty-foot equivalent (TEU) cargo containers in 2006. The Southern California Association of Governments, using data obtained by the ports, estimates that more than 44.7 million TEUs will pass through the port complex in 2030.

“Despite the recent flattening of trade with Asia, cargo moving through the Los Angeles/Long Beach port complex is going to accelerate over the next two decades as China overtakes Mexico and Canada as the United States’ top trade partner,” Bingham said.

About 50 percent of the goods imported through the ports are consumed within a 200-mile radius. According to the Port of Long Beach Economic Impact Report in 2005 more than 230,000 jobs are supported directly and indirectly by port operations.

“The ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach support a vast network of businesses and jobs in the goods movement supply chain across Southern California, from the ports’ backyards to the Inland Empire,” Husing said. “Without environmental clean-up and infrastructure improvements the supply chain will slowdown, negating opportunities for economic growth in a region that has the opportunity to create a very large number of good paying blue collar goods movement jobs.”

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About FuturePorts

FuturePorts was established to serve as a forum and provide regional leadership for economic and environmental issues at the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach. FuturePorts mobilize business, community and government leaders from across sectors to join as members to build consensus on an integrated planning approach to solving port, industry and community concerns. For more information, please visit www.futureports.org.