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NASCO Bulletin  
 Monitoring Major Transportation Developments in North America

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Monday, July 2, 2007

NASCO staff monitors major developments affecting the future of the freight transportation system in North America, highlighting their significance to the NASCO SuperCorridor and NASCO Coalition members, partners and supporters.

Below, in a report featured in The San Diego Union-Tribune newspaper, the Ports of Los Angeles-Long Beach, gateway for 40 percent of total U.S. imports and 25 percent of total U.S. exports, foresee such trade flows continuing for years into the future.

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THE SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE

L.A. ports authority

West Coast giants see Baja bay project as safety valve, not competitor

By Gordon Smith

COPLEY NEWS SERVICE

Sunday, July 1, 2007

LOS ANGELES - The attitude that the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach have toward talk of a proposed megaport in the remote Baja California bay of Colonet might be summed up in three words: What, me worry?

CAROL KRON / Copley News Service

A container ship docks at the Port of Los Angeles, where officials say there will be enough cargo from Asia to keep them busy even if a new Mexican megaport is built 150 miles south of San Diego in Baja California.

Predicting that a river of Asian cargo flowing into the United States will continue to swell for at least the next 13 years, officials at the two Los Angeles-area ports - the largest by volume in the nation - say there's likely to be plenty of freight for everyone even if the Mexican port is built 150 miles south of San Diego.

"The sense right now is that there's enough cargo to go around. We're not seeing developments like Punta Colonet as being threatening to our port," said Mike Christensen, deputy executive director for development for the Port of Los Angeles. "We're looking at it as a safety valve as much as anything else."

Port of Long Beach spokesman Art Wong agreed. "Realistically, we can't handle all of the growth," he said.

Still, as delays dog the proposed port in Baja, the two Los Angeles-area ports - together with their related agencies and private partners - are gearing up to spend billions of dollars to expand container terminals, replace bridges, streamline rail and freeway connections, and make other major infrastructure improvements.

The projects are aimed at ensuring that the lion's share of Asian goods headed for the U.S. market will continue to flow through Los Angeles-area container terminals.

"The port ... will continue to invest in infrastructure projects that will enable it to maintain its competitive position as America's leading container port," according to the Port of Los Angeles' proposed fiscal 2007-08 budget.

One thing could bring that strategy to a screeching halt: environmental concerns. The ports' full-speed-ahead growth in recent decades has been blunted by criticism over the increasing air pollution spewing from diesel-powered ships, tugboats, trucks, trains and other cargo-moving equipment.

The ports are the single largest polluter in the smog-ridden greater Los Angeles area. A recent state study found that they cause an estimated 1,200 premature deaths annually from particulate and ozone pollution. Another study concluded that
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