



Embargoed until 9:30 am

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Utah Physicians' Statement on the Development of an Inland Port

In support of the community press conference on:

Date: May 23, 2018

Time: 9:30 am

Location: Corner of 500 South and Main Street

Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment (UPHE) stands together with community representatives today to fulfill our mission of protecting the health and well-being of Utahns. We are here to encourage public engagement in discussions over the development of the Inland Port. This is not only an issue that involves the communities adjacent to the proposed port. This involves communities from the north to the south of the Wasatch Front. We are here to safeguard the hard-fought victories by communities, clean air advocates, and state and city level agencies to reduce air pollution and protect our families' health. These wins will be clouded by significantly higher vehicle and in particular, cancer-causing diesel pollution that an inland port would bring in.

Just in the last two months key research and reports have highlighted Utah's high lung cancer rates and that even small increases in pollution heightens the risk of lung infections for children. We are also in an area that ranks 8th in the country for short-term small particulate pollution and 18th for ozone.

Our state is barely meeting federal standards, while research already shows that pollution levels lower than federal standards cause increased mortality and stillbirth rates. This calls for a careful thought process and stakeholder engagement in any large development project. However, from the way the inland port authority bill was pushed forward behind closed doors, and in the wee hours of the legislative session, it is clear that multi-stakeholder engagement is not a priority of those who should be the champions of good governance.

We do not see any way this will project not bring a significant increase in Salt Lake Valley air pollution, freeway grid lock, and pressure for ever more freeway construction. Has there been adequate research and discussion on the environmental and health effects of an inland port before any bill was drafted? Will the community be assured that all fleets that enter/exit the area would be low emission vehicles? Will added traffic compete with much-needed smart development and infrastructure for cycling, walking, and public transport? How will the port affect communities who are already struggling with higher levels of pollution in their microenvironments, those who work late in the night and need to endure noise and light pollution?

The effects of air pollution are a somber litany to recite: premature deaths, strokes, heart attacks, brain disease and dysfunction, decreased lung function, cancer, still births, pregnancy complications, impaired fetal development and shortened life expectancies.

One life lost is not just a statistic. Neither is a hundred and definitely not a thousand. And we are already losing over a thousand lives a year to air pollution. We ask our leaders to create a transparent process and decision-making structure on the port that values Utahns' health, environment and voice. Utah residents want and deserve a clean air, clean energy, and a clean future