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Re: LD 809

An Act To Prohibit the Purging of Volatile Organic Compound Gases from Oil Tankers in the Waters of Maine

To: Senator Stacy Brenner
Representative Ralph Tucker
Members of the Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

Good morning, My name is Becky Bartovics and I reside on the Penobscot Island of North Haven. I am representing myself this morning as a very concerned citizen but also as a grandmother of five young children of North Haven and South Portland. I urge you to vote ought to pass on LD 809.

Volatile Organic Compounds found in the gases emitted from tankers are a serious threat not only to the health of residents in ports but they are also potent green house gases. One only has to be in South Portland, and presumably in Searsport, Hamden and even in small ports on the coast, when tankers are off loading fuel, asphalt and other such materials. The smells are overwhelming. Some of those gases, such as benzene, have no scent but are nevertheless powerful carcinogens.

VOC's are emitted by tankers when they are loaded, when they are in transit and when they are offloading materials. However capturing these gases are standard in many international ports and in other US states. It is incumbent upon this legislature to plug the holes in our regulations so that we can expect these very profitable industries to comply with the highest standards when in Maine waters. Maine's environment is already subject downwind pollution (as Senator Collins says, at the tailpipe of the nation) of East Coast emissions as it is. Allowing the continuation of lax regulation to increase the impact of VOC's on residents and our environment is unacceptable and certainly falls on communities of less means, making it a social justice issue. <https://safety4sea.com/ocimf-voc-emission-control-methods-for-oil-tankers/>

Apparently the DEP Air Quality Monitoring system is so underfunded that there are few VOC monitoring stations around the state or in ports, as per a staff member from that division. I urge the ENR Committee to not only vote LD 809 ought to pass, but to assure that regulations will be written and enforced by the DEP.

Respectfully Submitted
Becky Layton Bartovics

