

Addressing Air Pollution at United States Ports: U.S. EPA Office of Inspector General Report



Walter Wright, Jr.
wwright@mwlaw.com
(501) 688.8839

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The United States Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) Office of Inspector General (“OIG”) issued a September 21st report titled:

The EPA Needs to Address Increasing Air Pollution at Ports (“Report”)

See Report No. 23-E-0033.

The stated purpose of this OIG evaluation was to:

. . . determine what steps, if any, the EPA is taking to address the increase in air pollution from oceangoing vessels, or OGVs, U.S. maritime ports.

OIG cites United States Department of Transportation data indicating that United States ports:

. . . continue to handle unprecedented amounts of cargo.

This increase in maritime traffic is stated to have begun in 2020 and resulted in decreased air quality at several United States ports.

Data is also cited from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration which states that increased maritime traffic at the ports of Los Angeles, New York, and New Jersey has caused significant amount of pollution to be released into the atmosphere.

Emission sources from port operations are stated to include:

- Oceangoing vehicles (“OGVs”)
- Cargo-handling equipment
- Trucks

The OIG Report components include:

- Discussion of Increased Maritime Traffic and Air Pollution
- Human Health and Climate Change Impacts of OGV Pollution
- EPA and State Oversight of the U.S. Maritime Shipping Industry
- EPA’s Ports Grant Funding and Voluntary Ports Initiative
- Responsible EPA Offices
- Current Air Monitoring at Ports
- Community Groups’ Air Monitoring Data
- Emission Inventories Related to OGVs
- EPA Port Emissions Performance Measures (or lack thereof)

The OIG Report recommends that the EPA Assistant Administrator for Air and Radiation:

1. Assess the air-monitoring network around ports and in near-port communities and create a plan to enhance the air-monitoring network where any gaps are identified.
2. Set quantifiable performance measures for the Ports Initiative, including a plan for identifying the measures' baselines.

A copy of the OIG Report can be downloaded [here](#).