

**Coalition for Healthy Ports**  
**Clean Water Action   Ironbound Community Corporation**  
**New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance   South Ward Environmental Alliance**

**Immediate Release:** Tuesday January 25, 2022

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TODAY, Newark – The Coalition for Healthy Ports (CHP)\* issued a call for action regarding the scrap yard fire at Eastern Metal Recycling Terminal at Port Newark, the second large fire at this site since September 2021.

Current policies, regulations and emergency response procedures leave communities and workers vulnerable to unknown chemical exposures and other harms of this facility and others like it during routine operations, only made worse during crisis management.

Community notification procedures and air monitoring systems are inadequate, leaving residents clueless as to what to do to protect themselves and their families. The only information residents are getting is from news reports. Agencies will have limited information to assess the situation, pollution impacts, and/or consider remedies to put in place in the future.

It is also alarmingly unclear who has jurisdiction for permits, operations, emergency response and enforcement at Port Newark - Port Authority of NY&NJ (PANYNJ), NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), Office of Emergency Management (OEM), Federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) for port, on-site and emergency responders just to name a few. The PANYNJ fire team deemed themselves ill equipped so the City of Newark Fire Department was called in to respond. Additionally, NJDEP's oversight is currently limited, but we anticipate that the long awaited environment justice rules will include scrap yards - facilities that have long eluded regulatory controls and tools for community accountability.

**The Coalition for Healthy Ports calls on the Governor and other responsible agencies to:**

- take immediate action to protect residents and workers, properly and regularly inform them of developments related to the fire
- install emergency and permanent air/water monitors to assess pollution and health impacts
- evaluate reasons for current fire and take immediate steps to prevent future fires
- exercise enforcement powers where they may currently exist
- formally propose and adopt cumulative impact regulations as soon as possible, including scrap yards and other previously un/underregulated facilities of concern
- resolve chronic jurisdictional issues and enforcement powers at the port
- hold a community meeting to both inform and receive public input on their concerns and demands for action

**Below are quotes from impacted community leaders and Coalition for Healthy Ports members:**

“ We often have to worry not just about fires but what is burning in those fires. No one should go to bed with nausea or headaches from the smells outside but our residents know the feeling all too well. This fire joins a long list of situations that remind us how close we are to potential catastrophe in our communities because of the concentration of toxic reactive chemicals. We need more than lip service, we need real protection. It is exhausting to keep asking for protection from our state but there are decades of historic injustice that must be addressed.” - **Maria Lopez-Nuñez**, Deputy Director, Organizing and Advocacy, Ironbound Community Corporation

“Longshoreman and Newark residents deserve to be protected from fires at Port Newark. Our health must be a priority of Gov. Murphy and the PANYNJ. As a South Ward resident living in a Port community, we demand mandatory air monitoring and environmental enforcement at the Port today.” - **Kim Gaddy**, Executive Director, South Ward Environmental Alliance and New Jersey Environmental Justice Director, Clean Water Action

“Leadership at the Port of Newark has consistently denied their responsibility for air pollution beyond their fence line. This is a clear incidence of serious impacts as far away as New York City. We need fence line air monitoring and community accountability from the Port and its tenants.” - **Melissa Miles**, Executive Director, New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance

“This fire is a reminder of the threats that port related waste facilities pose to community and worker health. In times of emergency, we must have clear lines of communication and a coordinated response to protect people. We call on state and local agencies together with the PANYNJ to ensure effective monitoring and enforcement to prevent future fires.” - **Ana Baptista, P.h.D.** Co-Director, Tishman Environment & Design Center, The New School University and Coalition for Healthy Ports Member

“The frequency of chemical fires occurring in New Jersey is on the rise – sounding the alarm for immediate action. The state must step up enforcement of existing laws and adopt long awaited cumulative impact protections including strict oversight of polluting facilities and scrap yards in already grossly overburdened communities and port region. Anything less than this is an environmental and public health injustice to residents and workers.” - **Amy Goldsmith**, NJ State Director, Clean Water Action and Steering Committee Member, Coalition for Healthy Ports

"The New Jersey Governor's Office, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and all relevant governmental agencies need to work together to address this alarming fire and to prevent this type of incident from happening again in the future." - **Nicky Sheats, Esq., Ph.D.**, Director, Center for the Urban Environment, John S. Watson Institute for Urban Policy and Research at Kean University, and New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance Member

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**\* Coalition for Healthy Ports (CHP)** is a bi-state alliance founded in 2007 by environmental and environmental justice activists, truck drivers, faith leaders, labor unions, and community advocates fighting for zero emissions, clean air, good jobs, healthy communities, environmental and economic justice at the Ports of New York and New Jersey and throughout the logistics industry. Particular emphasis is given to port-adjacent communities that are disproportionately overburdened by port pollution and operations.  
[www.coalitionforhealthyports.org](http://www.coalitionforhealthyports.org)