

Fighting for a Better Freight and Goods Movement System in NJ

The Problem

As online shopping becomes more prevalent, there has been a proliferation of large warehouses to store and distribute goods all across the Garden State. With it comes a dramatic increase in local truck traffic, accidents and pedestrian safety concerns. As a result, warehouses have a significant negative impact on air quality, particularly in low-income and communities of color where goods movement is concentrated.

Dirty diesel trucks emit nitrogen oxides, particulate matter and many other co-pollutants as they move from port to warehouse to delivery. They cause a wide range of health problems, including asthma, lung cancer, strokes, and heart disease. These health impacts are often felt most acutely by the most vulnerable members of our society, including children and the elderly.

Additionally, warehouses can cause:

- Flooding resulting from poor site design and more impervious cover
- Water and ground pollution due to contaminated runoff
- Loss of natural habitats and farmlands
- Light and noise pollution
- Non-regenerative land use that degrades quality of life and character of the local area or neighborhood
- Jobs typically are low wage, irregular hours, call for speed-up or other dangerous working conditions

Since 2021, several warehouse bills in NJ have been proposed. The NJ Office of State Planning created a Warehouse Guidance Document (September 2022) but it is only advisory. It does not make it mandatory for NJ municipalities to utilize its recommendations in their Master Plans, Zoning Ordinances, or site permit approvals.

Solutions

Indirect Source Review:

Clean Water Action is exploring the potential of utilizing a provision of the federal Clean Air Act, called Indirect Source Review (ISR), to help reduce air pollution at warehouses, ports, and other locations where truck emissions are concentrated. Indirect Source Review would allow the State to impose conditions at these locations by treating them as if they had one smokestack (like a power plant) instead of many tailpipes. In doing so, we can better protect the health and well-being of nearby communities.



Additional measures to be taken include, but not limited to:

- Electrifying all aspects of the freight & goods movement (including truck fleets, ships, trains), as well as warehouse operations including solar panel installation and charging stations at loading docks
- Prioritizing port-adjacent, EJ (Environmental Justice) and OB (Overburdened) communities where the cumulative burden of pollution is the greatest
- Consider utilizing more highway-adjacent abandoned/former brownfield sites located away from neighborhoods to reduce exposure to harmful impacts and loss of open spaces and farmland
- Establishing “Zero Emission Zones” and specific “electric truck only” routes especially in port-adjacent, EJ/OB communities and where children and elders frequent so as to reduce exposure to harmful diesel emissions
- Passing an Indirect Source Review Bill in NJ that would apply to warehouses, ports, and where high volumes of trucks congregate
- Mandating regional planning, local master plan and zoning updates/ordinances across all NJ towns/municipalities to address warehouse siting and operational concerns before a warehouse project or other freight-related operation is proposed.

When applying the above mentioned solutions, together we can ensure that the freight and goods movement in NJ is as sustainable and efficient as possible without compromising the environment and the health of NJ communities and workers!



Clean Water Action brings people together to protect our environment, health, economic well-being and community quality of life. For any questions, comments and/or concerns about the Warehouse Campaign, contact:

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