

## On The Waterfront: Mr. Cordero goes to Washington

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Seven years after spearheading sweeping environmental initiatives at the Port of Long Beach, local lawyer and professor Mario Cordero is headed to Washington to serve on a maritime commission at the request of President Barack Obama.

In a lengthy interview Monday, Cordero laid out his plans for the next few years as a member of the Federal Maritime Commission, a quasi-independent federal agency tasked with overseeing federal shipping rules.

Foremost, Cordero said he hopes his time mediating often-acrimonious disputes between shippers and environmentally minded community groups will be of value.

His first day in Washington is June 1.

"We've launched measures here at the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles that can be of great importance to other seaports around the country looking perhaps to improve air quality, improve efficiencies, improve infrastructure and at the same time ensure economic growth isn't impaired," Cordero said. "Some people doubted whether we could grow and sustain our environmental goals, but we proved we could. And we did it in a way that everybody benefitted."

Nominated to the Port of Long Beach Harbor Commission in 2003, Cordero was asked to serve on the FMC board by President Obama in 2010, though it took several months until the Senate confirmed his appointment in April.

'Green Port' pioneer

A longtime workers' compensation attorney and political science professor at Long Beach City

College,

Cordero was an early advocate of Long Beach's 2005 "Green Port Policy," which set to slash port-generated emissions in half within a decade.

The ambitious plan was immediately challenged by business groups, shippers and others who claimed it would undercut business, drive jobs away and send cargo to competing seaports.

Despite more than a dozen lawsuits by industry and several unsuccessful and arguably politically motivated federal investigations, Cordero and the port staff held firm, and in 2006 jointly signed an agreement with neighboring Los Angeles to undertake widespread environmental measures.

Those measures, incorporated as the Clean Air Action Plan, have since slashed emissions from the 10,000-plus trucks serving the port by 80 percent, reduced smog-forming pollutants from ships by an estimated 50 percent and dramatically cut diesel soot spewed by dockside equipment.

Somewhat ironically, Cordero is joining an agency that for more than two years led the attacks on local ports' environmental programs.

Between 2007 and 2009, the Federal Maritime Commission's governing board filed lawsuits, launched investigations and issued injunctions against several key programs in the Clean Air Action Plan, most prominently the Clean Truck Program.

The board to which Cordero is being assigned



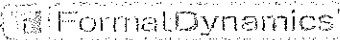
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argued the plan would irreparably harm trucking firms hauling cargo to and from the waterfront.

In one case, the FMC filed suit demanding an immediate injunction against port oversight of the

program, but the initiative was roundly dismissed by U.S. District Court Judge Richard Leon, who called the agency's arguments "weak" and "wholly unsupported" by the evidence.

#### Focus on exports

While declining to comment on the board's previous actions, Cordero said he believes it's moved on, primarily to focus on President Obama's goal of doubling U.S. exports by 2015.

"I think we have a lot of expertise, direction and advice within the board in terms of helping implement the president's export goals, improving shipping practices and keeping our promise to oversee responsible environmental practices as it concerns the shipping industry," Cordero said.

But as the board's newest member, Cordero has no illusions about changing federal shipping policy overnight.

"I'm not going in with any kind of mandate in mind," Cordero said. "I'll serve in whatever way I can be helpful. You don't turn the president of the United States down when he calls upon you to serve in any role, however big or small."

Cordero plans to keep his home in Long Beach, but will live with wife Gloria, a public relations executive, in the Washington, D.C., area for the remainder of his term, which expires in 2014.

"We're looking forward to being in the capitol, but we'll maintain close ties here in Southern California," Cordero said. "I've lived here most of my life, my (adult) children are here, and I expect we'll be back quite often."

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