SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY BY
CONGRESSMAN JIM COSTA

BEFORE THE
HOUSE ENERGY AND COMMERCE COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND AIR QUALITY

February 13, 2008

First, I want to thank Chairman Boucher for inviting me to testify today. This is an important issue for my district, and for improving air quality throughout the country, and I appreciate the opportunity to discuss this bill.

H.R. 3754 will allow the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to continue its prior practice of accepting diesel emission reduction projects as part of environmental enforcement settlement agreements.

For many years, the EPA has funded diesel retrofit projects through Supplemental Environmental Projects (SEP's) with corporations as part of settlement agreements. From FY 2001 to FY 2006, EPA entered into diesel emission reduction SEP's valued at $45.5 million. This bill will help maintain this separate, private source of funding for these projects.

In recent years, there has been a new era in clean diesel technology, which includes three critical parts. First, a cleaner burning, lower sulfur diesel; second, lower-emitting diesel engines; and third, new emissions control technology.

Retrofitting clean diesel technologies for diesel vehicles and equipment is one of the most cost-effective strategies for achieving tangible and immediate air quality benefits. Areas of the country struggling to meet clean air standards can greatly benefiting from diesel retrofits to help improve air quality.

Retrofits can be done on older vehicles or equipment. The EPA estimates these retrofit projects have a 13-to-1 benefit-to-cost ratio, meaning that the $45.5 million invested from FY 2001 to 2006 translates into almost $600 million in health benefits - from fewer asthma cases to fewer cardiopulmonary deaths.

Right now, more than 90% of commercial trunks are powered by diesel engines, and two-thirds of all farm and construction equipment run from diesel engines.

Diesel retrofitting for these engines can make a significant contribution to improving air quality – in particular, by reducing particulate matter emissions, which are linked to health hazards such as heart disease and lung cancer.

In closing, I want thank you, Chairman Boucher, and the members of the Subcommittee, for inviting me to testify. This bill will allow cost-effective, meaningful air quality improvement to continue, and I hope that the Subcommittee will give its support.