Port of LONG BEACH
THE PORT OF CHOICE



2026 AAPA Lighthouse Awards
Public Relations/Communications Excellence in Public Relations (PR) Campaign – Large Port
"20 Years Leading Green" Campaign

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AAPA - American Association of Port Authorities
2026 LIGHTHOUSE AWARDS

Port of Long Beach Application

Category: **Public Relations/Communications Awards**
Excellence in Public Relations (PR) Campaign – Large Port

Title: **'20 YEARS LEADING GREEN' Campaign**

Program/Project Summary

In late 2024, as Port organizers prepared for the annual State of the Port event set for January 2025, the upcoming 20th anniversary of the implementation of the Port's landmark Green Port Policy presented the perfect opportunity to celebrate the Port's environmental achievements and engage the Port's diverse audiences and stakeholders, while highlighting the Port's long-term zero-emissions goal. To showcase the Port's environmental efforts for the anniversary year, a campaign was created to be implemented throughout 2025 titled **20 Years Leading Green**.

1. **Background, Purpose & Goals**

In January 2005, the Long Beach Board of Harbor Commissioners, governing body for the Port of Long Beach (the Port), took a bold step – adopting a landmark **Green Port Policy**, an aggressive, comprehensive and coordinated approach to reducing the negative impacts of Port operations.

Through the years, the Port's environmental initiatives have made dramatic and documented gains in cutting air pollution, restoring water quality in the harbor, protecting wildlife and natural habitats, recycling and reusing construction materials, incorporating green building practices, and nurturing groundbreaking new clean technologies. The Policy has been nationally recognized and become a model for ports worldwide. All this has been accomplished by working closely with industry, community and labor stakeholders, resulting in the most dramatic and substantial environmental progress ever seen in the goods movement industry. Today the Port moves cargo valued at $300 billion a year and generates 2.7 million jobs across the U.S., as it continues to lead the world on sustainability programs and plans to double those benefits by doubling volume.

Building the Port of the Future, the Port is guided by its bold new 2050 vision – a plan to double current annual container volumes to 20 million by 2050. By strategically modernizing the Port's infrastructure with $3.3 billion in capital investments over the next decade and developing

digital systems to dramatically enhance efficiency and visibility, the Port is, indeed, becoming the world's first zero-emissions port.

In late 2024, as Port organizers prepared for the annual State of the Port event set for January 2025, the upcoming 20th anniversary of the policy presented the perfect opportunity to celebrate the Port's environmental achievements and engage the Port's diverse audiences and stakeholders, while highlighting the Port's long-term zero-emissions goal. To showcase the Port's environmental efforts for the anniversary year, a campaign was created to be implemented throughout 2025 titled **20 Years Leading Green**.

Targeted audiences for the campaign included: elected and appointed officials; current and potential Port clients; companies that service the Port, government agencies, environmental watchdogs and other Port stakeholders; safety and security agencies; Long Beach residents and community organizations; educators, students and future employees; and members of the news media.

Campaign objectives were to:

- Create a yearlong campaign to celebrate the anniversary: "20 Years Leading Green" – and a catchy accompanying slogan: 92/71/98, referring to percentage reductions of emissions in three categories;
- Create a campaign logo and look for communications and collateral materials;
- Use campaign logo in tandem with Port logo (Port of Long Beach, The Green Port);
- Produce campaign materials;
- Minimize campaign costs by piggybacking already-scheduled and annual Port programs, events and campaigns;
- Whenever possible, engage Port stakeholders;
- Incorporate Port video and photography reflecting the Green Port;
- Create a Green Port Progress Report;
- In addition to targeting traditional news media, maximize the use of web-based and social media to promote the campaign and campaign-themed events and activities;
- Evaluate the success of the campaign based on out-of-pocket cost, post-event surveys, social media responses, online analytics and traditional media coverage.
- Limit additional spending beyond existing Communications budgets

2. Implementation & Resources

The "20 Years Leading Green" campaign was conceived, written and designed in-house by the Port's Communications and Community Relations team, with assistance from contract photographers, videographers, printers, event planners and vendors for A/V services, producing promotional items, etc.

The overall Communications budget for advertising, photo/video, printing and event support was approximately $2.5 million. To have maximum impact for minimum incremental cost,

besides a few campaign-specific events, existing programs and collateral materials were re-themed to deliver the campaign message, and the campaign logo was consistently used in tandem with the standard Port of Long Beach logo in all communications, whatever the medium, from pole banners to electric cars.

Display and promotional materials were utilized repeatedly at event after event, supplanting standard Port of Long Beach materials, so with no incremental cost. Cost for staff time was included in departmental budgets.

CAMPAIGN EVENTS

The 20 Years Leading Green campaign included the following major events that were either new or substantially changed to reflect the campaign theme:

State of the Port – existing event – The first major activity for the Port each year is the State of the Port event, an address by the CEO scheduled each January to highlight accomplishments and look ahead to challenges and opportunities. The 2025 event featuring then-Port CEO Mario Cordero, as well as Long Beach Mayor Rex Richardson and then-Harbor Commission President Bonnie Lowenthal, was held Jan. 14 at the Long Beach Convention Center's Pacific Ballroom in front of a record audience of 900 people attending in person and another 800 watching online. The 20 Years Leading Green logo and campaign were unveiled and the other key component of the campaign – 92-71-98 (percentage reductions in diesel, nitrogen oxide and sulfur oxide emissions since 2005) – was also heavily featured. The focus was on two decades of achievements, with special emphasis on emissions reductions, development of the new Pier B on-dock rail facility and a partnership with the Port of Humboldt on wind energy.

PHOTOProgram – existing event – One of the Port's most popular community outreach programs is the annual PHOTOProgram, which began in 2014. Each year, the Port selects participants from a pool of applicants to attend a daylong workshop given by professional port photographers and capture the sights and scenes of the harbor during a sunrise or sunset cruise through the Port. The photos are then judged by a panel selected by the Arts Council for Long Beach and put on display in the Port Administration Building Lobby during regular business hours. Photographers are awarded cash prizes for the top three photos at a grand opening reception. For the 2025 tour, participants were directed to look at the Port through a "green" lens in conjunction with the Green Port Policy anniversary and 20 Years Leading Green campaign. The event was shifted from its usual late summer/early fall time period with an exhibition scheduled during "October Is Arts Month" in Long Beach to February so that the grand opening and exhibit would take place in April for Earth Month. The photos were on display in the Port's lobby, open to the public, April 16 until May 22, and a gallery of all the photos may be viewed at www.polb.com/photoprogram.

Long Beach Grand Prix – existing event – In mid-April, the Port was a major sponsor of the Acura Grand Prix of Long Beach, with branding visible throughout the grounds. The ongoing support for the annual IndyCar race included sponsoring the Official Green Power Port Pace Car, a fully electric Acura ZDX that participated in all ceremonial pace car activities throughout the April 11-13 event. The 2025 race marked the 50th anniversary of the Grand Prix and drew a record crowd of more than 200,000 spectators to downtown Long Beach. Over the three-day race, TV audiences averaged more than 550,000 viewers.

Earth Day Activities – The Official Green Power Port Pace car returned to the spotlight April 22 for Earth Day. The Port displayed the bright turquoise, navy and green Acura ZDX flanked by life-size turquoise foam replicas of 91-72-98 in the Long Beach Civic Center Plaza. The Port also posted photos of its green fleet on social media, sponsored tree-planting and held a volunteer employee beach cleanup.

Green Port Celebration Harbor Tours – new event – The Port of Long Beach hosted free "Green Port Celebration Tours" on Saturday, July 12, commemorating the 20th anniversary of the Green Port Policy by showing the public close-up views of the nation's largest seaport complex, offering the community a chance to experience the sights and sounds of a working port while highlighting the Port of Long Beach's environmental achievements over the last two decades. More than 1,200 people attended the five 90-minute boat tours.

Green Port Hero Awards – new event – As a culmination of the Leading Green campaign, the Port also introduced the Green Port Hero Awards in April during Earth Month. The new program recognized and celebrated businesses, nonprofit organizations and individuals who have made important contributions advancing environmental sustainability in the spirit of the Green Port Policy. The Port recognized leaders in five categories: Supply Chain, Industry and Nonprofits, whose candidates were nominated by Port staff; Youth, chosen from students attending Long Beach-area schools and nominated by Long Beach teachers; and Neighborhood, based on nominations from the community. The awards were presented at a December event.

ADVERTISING ELEMENTS/COLLATERAL MATERIALS

In addition to the Port's standard advertising in traditional, trade and social media – all converted to the campaign theme and logo – the following new elements were campaign-specific:

Pole Banners – In mid-March, ahead of Earth Day, the Port placed 400 new banners throughout the Harbor District along Ocean Boulevard, stretching along the waterfront from downtown Long Beach to neighboring Belmont Shore. The banners also appeared on streets surrounding the downtown Long Beach Civic Center and adorned the busiest corridors of each of Long Beach's nine council districts. The brightly colored banners featured the 20 Years Leading Green

logo and highlighted Green Port efforts in Air, Water, Wildlife, Sediments & Soils, Community and Sustainability.

Billboards – In addition to using the 20 Years Leading Green logo in trade and community advertising throughout 2025 (in tandem with the Port's standard logo), the Port placed billboard advertising in strategic freeway locations around Southern California, near the Port and in corridors heavily trafficked by commuters and truckers, highlighting both the Port's environmental achievements and its importance as an economic engine. And to reach state and federal policymakers and businesspeople, billboards were also placed at both Sacramento International Airport in the California capital and Reagan National Airport just outside Washington, D.C.

Social Media – The Port's social media channels (Instagram, X, Threads, LinkedIn, Facebook and YouTube) featured campaign items relating to the events mentioned above, but in addition featured:

- A Leading Green "commercial," first of a series, showing how the Port affects lives in Long Beach, highlighting its effect on lifestyles: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vz1jjCCsmDg
- Photos of the 92-71-98 numbers (the Port's emissions reductions numbers) throughout the Port and at various locations around Long Beach
- An ongoing "What's Green in the Box?" social media video series, featuring not only the Port's green practices, but environmentally friendly products that pass through the Port as cargo. Featured so far:
  - Solar Panels: https://youtube.com/shorts/wynOG2nimyw
  - Bicycles: https://youtu.be/SSzVWRX_f1g

Green Port Progress Report – Along with its public outreach efforts, the Port also strives to keep governmental and regulatory stakeholders informed about the Port's environmental achievements. To that end, the Communications and Government Relations divisions collaborated to create "A Greener Port, Today and Tomorrow" – Port of Long Beach Green Port Progress Report. The 24-page brochure tells the 20 Years of Leading Green story as well as providing a snapshot of current projects and a look to the future, using text enhanced with graphics, icons and colorful photos. The brochure was used as a "leave-behind" during visits to local, state and federal elected and appointed officials.

Community Brochure – Several port flyers and a popular Harbor Area map were combined into one comprehensive document to distribute to the public at events. The brochure was conceived, written and designed by college interns staffing the Port booth at events, with assistance from the Communications design team, with project cost limited to printing. The result was a full-color, double-sided brochure, designed and folded to imitate a standard AAA map, with 10 panels dedicated to Port information on one side and a map on the reverse.

Promotional Items – included polo shirts, hats, sunglasses, hand sanitizer, magnetic pins, tablecloths, lanyards (for staff IDs) and cell phone holders, distributed at Port-sponsored events throughout the year.

3. Innovation & Relevance

Piggybacking existing programs and utilizing the 20 Years Leading Green logo in tandem with the Port's traditional logo proved to be an effective way to reach maximum audience with little additional cost.

The Green Port Celebration Harbor Tours event addressed the issue that the Port's Summer Harbor Tour series is often somewhat difficult to obtain seats for (demand is so high that a lottery system is used for tickets). The full day of tours were first-come, first-served, so that all attendees who were willing to come early or wait a short while were guaranteed a space. Only a few latecomers at the end of the day were unable to get aboard.

The new Green Port Heroes Award effectively engaged Port stakeholders for several months of the year, with promotions and nominations beginning in April, announcement of the Youth award in late May (shortly before school graduations) and culminating in the awards event in December.

4. Results, Evidence & Impact

All aspects of the campaign were deemed effective, successfully engaging the target markets with maximum participation and capacity attendance at events.

Year-to-year social media results were especially dramatic. Number of posts increased 15.6% to 2,213; impressions increased 242% to 5,335,118; shares increased 35% to 9,909; and reactions increased 29.8% to 74,158. All posts carried the campaign logo, but for posts with campaign-specific content, impressions numbered 1,027,092. Platforms include X, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Threads and YouTube.

Pole banners were seen by passengers in an estimated 6 million vehicles. Billboard placements were for varying lengths of time (5 months or for the year) with an estimated total of 83.5 million views.

Hard costs of the campaign were approximately $2.9 million (an approved overage of approximately $500,000 due to the billboard campaign addition mid-year) and, because the anniversary campaign was fully integrated in all aspects of 2025 communications, soft costs included substantial staff hours.

In the short term, the 20 Years Leading Green campaign drew attention to the Port's commitment to the Green Port Policy as well as the many ways in which the Policy has been implemented successfully throughout the Port.

Even with current cargo volumes has climbing to record levels, the environmental success the Port has achieved exceeds everyone's 2005 expectations, and more of the same is expected in the long term. Throughout the campaign, building the Port of the Future was emphasized, guided by its bold new 2050 vision – a plan to double current annual container volumes to 20 million by 2050, while achieving its goal of becoming the world's first zero-emissions port.

By piggybacking existing programs, events and campaigns, and supplanting traditional collateral materials, costs were kept to a minimum for this very successful campaign.

5. Integration, Adaptability & Scalability

The magic of the 20 Years Leading Green campaign was that it piggybacked and became one with each and every Port program throughout 2025.

The 20 Years Leading Green campaign was limited to 2025; however, the Green Port Policy is ongoing and integrated into all Port operations, with specific requirements and goals.

Also, as an industry leader, the Port of Long Beach is happy to and does share new policies, procedures and technologies with other ports worldwide.

6. Stakeholder Engagement & Collaboration

Each of the events in this campaign – State of the Port, PHOTOProgram, Long Beach Grand Prix, Harbor Tours and the Green Port Heroes Awards – relies on stakeholder engagement, successfully involving each of the Port's target audiences in a variety of ways.

7. Conclusion

The 20 Years Leading Green campaign was a worthy celebration of the Port's successful Port-wide implementation of the Green Port Policy and brought attention to the Port's ongoing commitment to be the world's first zero emissions from operations seaport. The campaign materials were attractive and effective, traditional and social media campaigns reached target audiences, and Port neighbors and stakeholders were drawn in to participate in the various events.

Acceptance of the Green Port Policy has come a long way since the beginning. In the early days of the Green Port Policy that helped lay the foundation for the environmental transformation of both San Pedro Bay ports – Long Beach and Los Angeles – fierce industry pushback prompted then-Port of Long Beach Harbor Commissioner James Hankla to quote Kermit the Frog: "It ain't easy being green," Hankla famously told 2005 naysayers who balked at the seven-page roadmap for reducing the negative environmental impacts of Port operations.

It still isn't easy, but proving it can be done, industry leaders have not only named Long Beach "The Best West Coast Seaport in North America" for a seventh consecutive year, but also "The Best Green Seaport" in 2025.