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JIM DOUGHERTY WIN NATIONAL SIERRA CLUB AWARD

SAN FRANCISCO, CA – Jim Dougherty of Washington, D.C., has won the 2008 Sierra Club Special Achievement Award. Dougherty has been a D.C. Sierra Club Chapter activist over the past 25 years and now serves as Chapter Conservation Chair. He recently completed his second term on the Board of Directors.

In Fall 2003, Dougherty took a series of photos of railroad tank cars carrying huge cargoes of highly toxic chemicals (e.g., liquified chlorine gas) within two blocks of the U.S. Capitol complex. The photos demonstrated how vulnerable the City of Washington is to a terrorist attack from this cargo. Jim took his photos first to the Chair of the D.C. City Council's Committee on the Judiciary, Kathy Patterson. When seeing the photos, she asked him and another activist to draft legislation to address the problem. Thus began one of the D.C. Sierra Club Chapter's most visible and effective legislative campaigns ever.

The centerpiece of the campaign was the photographs. Sierra Club had blow-ups made and took them to City Council briefings and hearings. These images were picked up by local news programs and broadcast locally. When word of the photos started to circulate, requests for reproduction rights started to pour in.

The photos have appeared in countless places:

- Senator Frank Lautenberg, a member of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs, made his own blow-ups to use at Department of Homeland Security oversight hearings. Many Capitol Hill staffers with offices overlooking the rail line scotch-taped copies of the photos to their windows and file cabinets;
- Traffic World, a transportation industry magazine, used one as a cover photo and another in a cover story
- Richard Falkenrath, former Deputy to White House National Security Adviser Richard Clark, when shown one of Dougherty photos as part of the Sierra Club's Powerpoint presentation, remarked "Oh yeah – that's the photo I showed to President Bush."
- The photos have been used in a number of leading newspapers including the *Washington Post*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Boston Globe* and the *Chicago Tribune*.

Dougherty took hundreds of photos of the chemical tank cars from many vantage points around the Capitol, often being where he was not supposed to be. More than once he was interrogated by federal security officers. His favorite shooting position was on top of a fence. Ultimately, the law that Dougherty drafted was passed by the City Council, in an 11-1 vote, after a major grassroots lobby campaign that Dougherty chiefly directed. Mayor Williams invited the Sierra Club to hold a joint news conference to announce his signing of the bill. In August of last year, Congress passed a law, modeled on the D.C. statute, intended to bring to the nation's largest 46 cities the increased safety afforded to D.C. residents as a result of Dougherty's leadership. President Bush signed it into law in September.

The award will be presented Sept. 20 during the Sierra Club's Annual Dinner in San Francisco. For more information on the Sierra Club awards program, visit www.sierraclub.org/awards.