

## **Oakland port program to clean up trucks, air**

By Kelly Zito, staff writer

S.F. Chronicle, Tuesday, July 28, 2009

The throaty rumble of diesel engines idling at the Port of Oakland isn't audible at Margaret Gordon's home 2 miles away. But the evidence of thousands of semis coming and going daily shows up in a different way -- toxic soot covers her windowsills and heating vents.

Now, air quality regulators are taking steps to reduce so-called diesel particulates in a neighborhood where increasing cases of asthma, chronic lung disease and cancer have sounded the alarm about the long-term health effects of heavy industry.

Today, representatives from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, California Air Resources Board and the Port of Oakland will announce a \$22 million program designed to replace and retrofit about 1,000 of the 2,000 or so diesel trucks that service the port.

"We have a lot of unhealthy air caused by the operation of the port and the highways surrounding the West Oakland area," said Damian Breen, state grants program manager at the Bay Area air district. "This is part of the district's attempts to address those problems."

About 800 trucks will be outfitted with specially designed particulate filters and 200 more trucks will be replaced. Officials say the project should cut diesel truck emissions by about 85 percent at the port. By Jan. 1, state regulations require that certain high-polluting trucks be banned from the port.

Even so, community activists like Gordon, co-founder of the nonprofit West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project, say efforts to reduce noxious pollution in West Oakland must go further. While the city of Oakland has restricted port trucks to certain routes and the state has curbed the permitted length of truck idling, Gordon said there needs to be a larger, more cohesive effort.

"The closest thing to the people are the trucks, but you also have to factor in ships, cargo equipment and trains," said Gordon. "There are all these moving parts that need to be coordinated together. Instead, it seems every five years, there are plans for retrofits."

For decades, the fates of the 25,000 or so residents of West Oakland have been closely tied to the waterfront's multiple uses: U.S. Navy base, ship building and the daily comings and goings of untold numbers of cargo containers. But in recent years, researchers have found such operations exact a high price.

Diesel particulates, considered the No. 1 air pollutant in California, can cause asthma, reproductive harm and cancer. In fact, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District has found cancer rates in West Oakland three times that of the region.

One of the trucking companies helped by the grants is Rodgers Trucking in San Leandro, a half-century-old family business that transports wines and spirits out of the port. A handful of the firm's 30 port trucks qualified for the retrofit program. The rest will be replaced with newer trucks in coming years.

"It's hit at a bad time for everyone -- our business is down, our customers' business is down," said Alan Osofsky, who is in charge of safety and compliance for Rodgers. "But we want to be a good neighbor and citizen and we want to do our part."

## **Fairbanks voters may choose pollution regulator**

The Associated Press

In the Contra Costa Times, Tri-Valley Herald and other papers, Tuesday, July 28, 2009

FAIRBANKS, Alaska—Fairbanks voters may decide whether they want the borough or the state to run a program to fight wintertime air pollution.

The borough assembly will review a proposed ballot measure Thursday that asks whether the local government should administer an air quality program for the state.

The Fairbanks Daily News-Miner reports the plan would entice residents to upgrade old wood- and coal-fed home heating systems. The borough has tentative plans for a stove change-out program featuring rebates, tax breaks and fines.

Earlier this month residents at an assembly meeting pushed local leaders to resist mandates from environmental regulators.

## **Greenpeace: China power companies hurting climate**

The Associated Press

In the Merced Sun-Star and Modesto Bee, Tuesday, July 28, 2009

BEIJING -- China's three largest energy suppliers emitted more greenhouse gases than all of Britain last year, environmental watchdog Greenpeace China said in a report issued Tuesday.

The report reflects the heavy reliance on coal that is hampering China's efforts to tackle climate change.

The country's 10 largest power companies supply nearly 60 percent of China's energy. They burned a fifth of all of China's coal in 2008 and emitted about 1.44 billion tons of carbon dioxide, which contributes to global warming, the report said.

The three biggest companies - China Huaneng Group, China Datang Corp. and China Guodian Corp. - produced more greenhouse gases than Britain in 2008, according to the report, titled "Polluting Power: Ranking China's Biggest Power Companies."

All three state-owned companies have also been warned in recent years by China's environmental protection agency as having "severe violations" of environmental safeguards.

While China's per capita emissions remain far below those of developed countries, China as a whole has already surpassed the United States to become the world's biggest emitter of greenhouse gases. The two countries account for 40 percent of the world's total emissions.

"China's power companies are not only the key coal consumer but also the major carbon dioxide emitter," Yang Ailun, Greenpeace China climate campaign manager, said in the report.

Greenpeace China urged China to impose on power companies an energy tax and an environmental tax on coal. It also urged China to double its target of getting its power from renewable energy to 30 percent by 2020.

China has made some progress. Over the past 3 1/2 years, it closed down inefficient coal-fired plants that produced 54.07 gigawatts of energy, equal to Australia's total power capacity, the report said.

Both China and the U.S. are looking for ways to cooperate on addressing the issue of climate change in preparation for UN-led talks in Copenhagen at the end of the year, which will seek to forge a framework for a global climate change treaty.

[Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses Sierra Club impedes 100 of 150 carbon thermoelectric plants authorized by the Bush Administration. For more information on this Spanish clip, contact Claudia Encinas at \(559\) 230-5851.](#)

## **Impide Sierra Club abrir a 100 de 150 termoeléctricas de carbón que había autorizado la administración Bush**

Manuel Ocaño

Noticiero Latino

Radio Bilingüe, Monday, July 27, 2009

La organización ambientalista, Sierra Club celebró haber impedido que se abrieran hasta ahora 100 de 150 termoeléctricas de carbón que había autorizado el gobierno del ex presidente, George W. Bush. Bruce Nilles es el director de la campaña contra el consumo de carbón de Sierra Club: "Durante los últimos seis años hemos peleado un legado de la administración Bush-Cheney que llevaba al país en la dirección equivocada, al autorizar 150 plantas de carbón", afirmó Nilles. Platicó que la semana pasada su grupo consiguió detener la centésima planta de carbón, y ahora van por el resto. El objetivo, dijo, es que al suspender las plantas de carbón, la opción en el mercado es la energía limpia. Una termoeléctrica de

carbón puede llegar a contaminar lo mismo que diez de las que consumen gas natural, y que ya se consideran obsoletas por la suciedad que causan al aire.