

Gateway Cities Fleet Modernization Program Celebrates 5 Years of Pollution Reduction

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LOS ANGELES COUNTY, Calif., Oct. 25 /PR Newswire/ -- This month, the Gateway Cities Council of Governments (GCCOG) celebrated the five-year anniversary of its landmark Fleet Modernization program for heavy-duty trucks. Since providing its first grant in October 2002, the Gateway Cities has allocated \$23.5 million from five different government funding partners to replace 628 older heavy-duty diesel trucks with newer, cleaner models. To date, these efforts have succeeded in eliminating an estimated 107 tons of toxic diesel particulate matter (PM), which is the leading airborne cause of cancer in California. In addition, emissions of smog-causing oxides of nitrogen (NOx) and reactive organic gases (ROG) have been reduced by an estimated 150 and 62 tons, respectively.

"We are excited and proud to achieve this milestone over five years," said the President of the GCCOG's Board of Directors, Elba Guerrero. "By removing older trucks from use and replacing them with newer trucks, the Gateway Cities Fleet Modernization Program is addressing Southern California's two most urgent air quality goals. Specifically, it reduces people's direct exposure to diesel particulate matter in highly impacted 'goods movement' corridors, and it helps the entire region achieve health-based ambient air quality standards."

The success of the Gateway Cities' Fleet Modernization program has resulted in the program serving as a model for similar efforts in other parts of California and across America. For example, the Clean Truck Program of the San Pedro Bay Ports -- a proposal to replace or retrofit nearly 17,000 port trucks that regularly visit the marine terminals of the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles -- may potentially be patterned after the Gateway Cities initiative. The Port of Oakland has implemented a similar program, after turning to the Gateway Cities for advice on how to establish and set up its truck replacement effort. Major cities and ports across America are considering similar programs.

When taking into account their full five-year project lives, the 638 trucks that have been replaced to date under the program are expected to reduce NOx and PM emissions throughout the greater Los Angeles area by an estimated 433 and 223 tons, respectively. As long as funding is available, the program will provide new grants that continue to build on these essential, cumulative emissions reductions.

Fleet Modernization is one of two elements of the Gateway Cities' Clean Air Program directed towards cleaning up in-use heavy-duty diesel trucks. The second element is the Port Truck Retrofit program, in which the GCCOG is helping the San Pedro Bay Ports with a pilot effort to demonstrate the feasibility of retrofitting port trucks with muffler-like devices that can reduce PM and NOx emissions from existing trucks by 85% and 25%, respectively. The pilot program is being funded primarily through a \$1.5 million allocation from the Port of Long Beach.

GCCOG's Clean Air Program was initiated with a \$1 million grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which resulted in a pilot project to generate diesel emission reductions in the Gateway Cities. The California Air Resources Board supplemented the GCCOG's truck replacement efforts with a \$1 million grant. To date, the Port of Los Angeles has contributed approximately 75% (or \$18 million) of the total funding used in the Fleet Modernization effort. Funding to replace trucks has also been received from the Mobile Source Emissions Reduction Review Committee (\$2.75 million) and the Port of Long Beach (\$1.5 million).

From the beginning, the program was designed to be business friendly in order to encourage port truckers -- the vast majority of whom are independent owner-operators -- to replace their older trucks. In return for agreeing to have their older trucks permanently retired (scrapped), the GCCOG grant helps them purchase a newer truck that is cleaner, safer, and more fuel efficient.

Marlene Mott, of Ontario California, received one of the first truck-replacement grants that the GCCOG awarded under the program. Ms. Mott officially completes her five-year agreement on November 4, 2007. Using grant funding to replace a 1982 model truck, she drove more than 200,000 miles in her replacement 1997 truck since receiving it, resulting in more than one ton of emissions reductions over five years. "I would not have been able to replace my truck" without the GCCOG grant, Mott said. "We need to clean up the air in Southern California, and newer trucks are the best answer," she said. "The Gateway Cities program brings important awareness about the need to clean up trucks."

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