

BC First on Clean Trucks

June 6, 2007 - SURREY – The B.C. government is marking Clean Air Day by making British Columbia the first province in Canada to make clean technology mandatory in older commercial transport diesel vehicles in order to reduce diesel emissions and protect human health, Environment Minister Barry Penner announced today.

“Hospital visits as a result of poor air quality cost our B.C. health care system an estimated \$85 million a year – these costs and human health impacts can be reduced,” said Penner. “This new regulation will reduce particulate matter by up to 60 tonnes per year and contribute to cleaner, greener communities.”

The new regulation will require the mandatory installation of Diesel Oxidation Catalyst (DOC) filters, or an equally effective technology, by 2009. In British Columbia, on-road heavy-duty diesel vehicle models 1989-1993 are responsible for 6.8 per cent of overall particulate matter pollution, a high proportion given the relatively small number of vehicles.

Installation of the DOC units will cost approximately \$1,200 to \$2,500 each and will affect 7,500 vehicles. DOC filters are one of the clean technology options that are easily installed on most vehicles, require virtually no maintenance, do not have a negative impact on vehicle performance or fuel consumption, and are compatible with biodiesel.

“A 1989-93 heavy duty diesel vehicle can emit up to 60 times the particulate matter of a newer model,” said Guff Muench, president of Cummins Western Canada. “DOC filters reduce emissions by 25 to 50 per cent, depending on the type of diesel used and on the engine’s age and characteristics.”

“The fact is, even in a province with some of the best air quality anywhere, air pollution contributes to as many as 250 deaths every year in British Columbia,” said Scott McDonald, executive director of the B.C. Lung Association. “This measure alone will improve air quality across the province and ease the pressures on our health care system.”

The new regulation will affect only heavy-duty diesel vehicles 5,000 kilograms or more, including on-road commercially licensed diesel vehicles and government-owned fleet vehicles. Recreational vehicles, motor coaches, pickup trucks, construction equipment and unlicensed non-road vehicles will not be affected.

However, once in place, the B.C. government will continue to consult with industry and other stakeholders to incorporate other model years and other sizes of vehicles as part of the government’s continuous review and improvement of air quality.

British Columbia is the first jurisdiction in North America to make retro-fit technology mandatory, although California is planning to make it mandatory by 2009 as well.

The new regulation builds on government funding commitments to new public transit projects like the \$1.9 billion Canada Line and financial incentives for hybrid vehicles and cleaner-burning fuels.