



NEWS

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Air District funds innovative marine highway project to cut diesel pollution

SAN FRANCISCO – Today the Bay Area Air Quality Management District approved \$750,000 in funding for a pioneering project, known as the marine highway, that will drastically cut pollution at the Port of Oakland.

The funding will be used to support the transportation, by cleaner river barge, of up to 50 percent of the agricultural cargo that comes through Stockton to be exported at the Port of Oakland—the fourth largest port in the nation. The barges will be propelled by tugboats powered with state-of-the-art emissions-reducing engines, providing an innovative solution to the pollution associated with goods movement.

“This marine highway project will help revolutionize cargo transportation in the Bay Area,” said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. “It’s the first step towards a cleaner, healthier goods movement infrastructure at the Port of Oakland.”

This unique shift in cargo transportation modes for the Bay Area is the first such project on the West Coast and takes advantage of the region’s natural waterways to decrease the toxic diesel pollution from truck traffic. It will eliminate 4,900 truck trips per week along Bay Area highways, reducing diesel pollution by 15 tons a year and significantly easing the air quality burden assumed by sensitive transportation corridor communities like West Oakland.

The maritime highway project is a unique public-private partnership between the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, the Ports of Stockton and Oakland, and the marine operator, Eco-Transportation.

The project has the support of the California Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Federal Maritime Commission, and is expected to commence in the summer of 2010 and reach peak capacity by summer 2012. It is part of the Air District’s comprehensive approach to reducing air pollution at the Port of Oakland, which also includes such strategies as funding diesel-powered truck retrofits and shore-side power projects.

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (www.baagmd.gov) is the regional agency chartered with protecting air quality in the Bay Area.

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