



NEWS

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Repowering the rails in Richmond

Field testing the cleanest "switcher" locomotive in the nation

SAN FRANCISCO - The Bay Area Air Quality Management District and its partners are currently testing the first switcher locomotive in the nation designed and built to meet US EPA Tier 4 emission standards, reducing exhaust emissions from older switcher locomotives by more than 90 percent.

The Air District received a grant of approximately \$530,000 from the California Air Resources Board to fund and administer the project, which is currently undergoing testing and certification. It was built by the National Railway Equipment Company, and is being operated by the Richmond Pacific Railroad in Richmond, CA. Locomotives using this technology should be commercially available beginning in 2015.

"Switcher engines commonly used at Bay Area railyards are decades old and a significant source of air pollution to the surrounding community," said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. "Developing cleaner engines can potentially reduce railyard pollution nationwide."

There are two types of commonly used locomotives - line-haul which move freight across long distances and switcher trains which move rail cars around railyards. Switchers are usually powered by a single older diesel engine which idles frequently, emitting significant amounts of pollution into the air. Switchers comprise approximately 25 percent of all locomotives in use.

"Diesel particulate matter emissions are a serious health concern, especially in and around railyards. It is critical that new technologies be developed and implemented to reduce the health impact of locomotives to communities throughout California," said Mary Nichols, Chairman of the California Air Resources Board. "We applaud technology providers like NRE and are pleased to work with them as well as Richmond Pacific and the Bay Area Air Quality Management District to help develop and test this technology."

This latest generation switcher locomotive integrates advances in engine and emission control technology. It replaces the single diesel engine with several smaller late model Cummins diesel/electric generators, which are similar in their emissions profile to a 2013 truck. It also incorporates advanced computer technology to reduce idling and allow for precise engine control, starting and stopping the engines only as power is needed. The use of low sulfur fuel reduces the formation of particulates associated with dirtier fuels. The remaining exhaust is passed through a particulate filter before being emitted.

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“The locomotive that we are testing will reduce air pollution from train operations significantly,” said Barbara N. O’Neill, director of marketing for Levin Richmond Terminal & Richmond Pacific Railroad. “The Richmond Pacific Railroad is dedicated to investigating new ways to help improve the air quality for all of those people who live and work in Richmond.”

“National Railway Equipment Company is excited to be working with the Air Quality Management District, and Richmond Pacific,” according to Keith Batley, AVP Sales and Marketing for NRE. “The operational and environmental advantages of this locomotive are dramatic. It reduces NOx and PM emissions by 80 percent, achieves up to 50 percent fuel savings, reduces maintenance and lowers noise levels. This is an outstanding project for California and world locomotive market.”

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is the regional agency responsible for protecting air quality in the nine-county Bay Area. For more information, visit www.baaqmd.gov.

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