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ADEQ Director Owens Announces Effort to Reduce Diesel Emissions in Nogales Area

PHOENIX (Aug. 13, 2008) – Arizona Department of Environmental Quality Director Steve Owens announced today that ADEQ is launching a new initiative to reduce diesel emissions in the Nogales area on the Arizona-Mexico border.

The \$100,000 project, funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, will equip about 30 diesel trucks that cross the border several times a day with devices to reduce particulate matter air pollution from diesel emissions by 20 to 30 percent. The devices will be installed free of charge to the owner. ADEQ is seeking to retrofit trucks which are expected to be on the highways for the next several years.

“This project will enhance ADEQ’s continuing efforts in the Nogales area to improve air quality and protect our children and families from exposure to harmful diesel emissions,” Director Owens said. “We strongly encourage fleet owners to participate in this important effort.”

Diesel emissions contain microscopic particulate matter consisting of both “fine” and “coarse” particles sized between 2.5 and 10 micrometers in diameter, also known as PM2.5 and PM10. A human hair is roughly 70 micrometers in diameter. The air in Nogales is especially affected by particulate pollution because the city is in a valley where airborne contaminants many times become trapped in an inversion layer.

ADEQ’s Office of Border Environmental Protection in Tucson will identify the trucks that will benefit most from the program. The program is being promoted by the Greater Nogales/Santa Cruz County Port Authority and the Fresh Produce Association of the Americas.

In addition, fleet owners in the Nogales area are invited to contact ADEQ’s Office of Border Environmental Protection in Tucson at (520) 628-6733 or toll free at (888) 271-9206 for additional information.

Diesel emissions include hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide, nitrous oxides, ozone and ozone precursors, and particulates and have been linked to respiratory and other health problems and can trigger asthma attacks in children.

Director Owens added that this new effort will complement other ADEQ programs to reduce diesel emissions, including ADEQ’s program to reduce school bus idling.