

News Release



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ADEQ Improves Air Quality in Nogales by Completing 55 Truck Retrofits that will Reduce Harmful Emissions

PHOENIX (Feb. 20, 2009) – Governor Jan Brewer announced today that a major initiative to improve air quality at the Arizona-Mexico border has been completed in Nogales with the installation of retrofit devices on 55 large cargo trucks to reduce harmful diesel emissions in the area.

The \$145,000 Arizona Department of Environmental Quality initiative, funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, equipped the trucks, which cross the border several times a day, with devices to reduce particulate matter air pollution from diesel emissions by nearly 30 percent. The project began in November 2008.

“It is critical to keep commerce moving throughout the State of Arizona without damaging the environment,” Gov. Brewer said. “The Truck Retrofit initiative is a good example of ADEQ’s efforts toward achieving cleaner air for our citizens while maintaining trade and the enormous economic impact that trade has on our state.”

The devices were installed free of charge to the truck owners by Auto Safety House, a fleet solutions provider headquartered in Phoenix. The company has completed similar retrofits in diesel school buses within the state. Trucking companies participating in the project were Express Tres Fronteras, Transportes De La Rosa, Hungaro Freight System Inc., C-Bar Hauling Inc., Panadero’s Trucking, Tractores y Camiones de Nogales, USA-MEX-CAN Transport, and Transportes META.

“Without the total buy-in from the eight fleet owners we would not have had this level of success,” said Jim LoPresti, CEO and President of Auto Safety House. “Their help and willingness to down trucks while the retrofits were performed showed their concern for the air quality in the Nogales community.”

ADEQ Acting Director Patrick J. Cunningham said, “This is an excellent project and shows our commitment to helping people breathe clean air throughout the State of Arizona.”

EPA officials said the retrofit project is another success story for the Border 2012 program, a collaboration between the United States and Mexico to improve the environment and protect the health of the nearly 12 million people living along the border. The binational program focuses on cleaning the air, providing safe drinking water, reducing the risk of exposure to hazardous waste, and ensuring emergency preparedness along the U.S.-Mexico border. The 10-year program is results-oriented and takes a “bottom-up” approach, identifying issues and implementing projects at the local level.

“Today we’re showcasing the kind of on-the-ground action that makes the air cleaner on both sides of the border,” said Deborah Jordan, the U.S. EPA’s Air Division director for the Pacific Southwest region. “The Border 2012 program is once again demonstrating the impact we can have when we work together to tackle challenging environmental problems.”

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.

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.

Cunningham said that the completed Nogales initiative complements other ADEQ programs to reduce diesel emissions, including the department’s program to reduce school bus idling, which has been adopted by more than 700 school districts in the state.