ICAMP Remarks: California’s Fight against Toxic Diesel
October 21, 2013

**Introduction – Oakland context for necessity of reducing diesel emissions**

It is fitting to be standing in front of you today in Oakland, home to the fifth busiest container port in the United States, where each year – billions of dollars of goods move from ships to trains and trucks and throughout our state.

This industry provides the economic backbone of many of our state’s communities, yet – historically – the economic benefits of our growing global marketplace have sometimes come with human costs. Here in Oakland, residents experience some of the highest airborne cancer risks in California and PM-related health effects – because of their proximity and exposure to diesel emissions.

Reducing toxic emissions from diesel sources is essential to protect people living in this community, and communities around the world from the effects of harmful air pollutants.

**Introduce air quality/climate nexus of black carbon**

As we’ve heard, the black carbon component of diesel and other emissions is also a powerful greenhouse gas. Various studies have shown that concerted action to reduce global black carbon emissions can deliver immediate and significant climate and economic benefits, and save millions of lives.

California reduced black carbon and diesel emissions by 90%, and is continuing to work to address the problem and improve health in our communities.

**California’s leading approach to reduce diesel emissions**

We set our first particulate matter and NOx engine standards for new heavy duty engines in the late 1980s. Driven by the requirement to meet increasingly more stringent national health-based air quality standards, we continued to tighten our new engine emission standards over the next two decades.

As research taught us more about the impact of diesel emissions, the need to aggressively reduce diesel emissions to protect public health became even more apparent. In 1998, ARB identified diesel particulate matter as a toxic air contaminant, and since then, it’s been found to make up about 70 percent of the state’s estimated airborne cancer risk levels. Children are especially vulnerable.

In 2000, ARB developed a comprehensive Diesel Risk Reduction Plan, with the goal of reducing these toxic emissions and their associated health risk by 85% by 2020. This was an aggressive goal—and could not be achieved solely by setting increasingly stringent new engine standards. So the Plan outlined a comprehensive approach that included tightening standards for new engines, cleaning up existing engines, utilizing low-sulfur fuels, and evaluating alternatives to diesel vehicles.

Since then, we have developed a wide-ranging suite of measures to put this Plan into action:

* We’ve tightened new engine emission standards.
* We‘ve implemented a host of rules aimed at cleaning up the dirtiest engines already in use in California, including retrofit requirements for on-road, off-road, and stationary source engines, as well as idling limits for on-road trucks.
* We’ve prioritized many of the sources that posed the greatest threat to human health. Transit agency fleets, school buses and solid waste collection vehicles—all located in close proximity to residents and children—were some of the first sources we targeted for clean-up. So were trucks operating at California ports.
* We’ve targeted a wide-range of other sources as well, including agricultural pumps and other stationary compression engines; portable engines; transport refrigeration units; and port and rail cargo handling equipment.
* And in 2008, we passed a rule requiring all heavy duty diesel trucks and buses operating in the state of California be upgraded to improve their emissions. Within the next decade, nearly all trucks and buses will need to have 2010 model year engines or equivalent.

**Multipronged regulatory approach included fuels as well**

Our approach to reducing diesel emissions has not only focused on regulating diesel engines, but has also tackled cleaning up the fuels used in California. We have regulated diesel fuels for locomotives, harborcrafts, and ship auxiliary engines.

Our Low Carbon Fuel Standard—the first in the world—requires oil refineries and distributors to ensure that the mix of fuel they sell in California meets established declining carbon intensity targets. As a result, the Low Carbon Fuel Standard is helping us transition to cleaner fuels, and is helping us transition from traditional diesel to the use of cleaner biodiesel.

**A comprehensive approach leads to success**

Our efforts to clean up dirty diesel in California do not rely on regulation alone. We combine regulations with incentives, research, outreach and education, and strong partnerships with local agencies and stakeholders.

The state has already spent well over $1 billion to help businesses retrofit diesel trucks, and will spend hundreds of millions more in the coming years to help businesses and truck owner/operators comply with our regulations.

ARB has established an innovative loan program to offer financing opportunities to those who might not otherwise receive them.

And we are providing financial incentives to encourage California fleets to purchase hybrid and zero-emission trucks and buses – a successful program that other cities and states are now working to replicate.

The success of our diesel emission regulations relies on strong enforcement to validate emissions reductions and provide a level playing field for all fleets and truckers.

Success also requires extensive education and outreach. We’ve hosted numerous workshops, created a fully-staffed diesel hotline to provide information and assistance, and we continually visit Ports and inspection stations to interface with truckers.

We also continue to fund and follow the latest research, which provides the underlying scientific foundation that supports everything we do.

**A shout out to collaboration**

Collaboration—the very thing that brings us here today—has been critical as well.

From co-funding research to coordinating funding grants, local air districts, ports, and other stakeholders have helped bring about a cumulative improvement in California’s air quality.

 **These efforts have led to tremendous progress**

These efforts are delivering tremendous benefits. Today’s new diesel engines are 98% cleaner than they were before we began setting new engine emission standards.

Statewide, black carbon levels have decreased by about 90 percent over the last 45 years, even as diesel consumption has increased fourfold.

Here at the Port of Oakland, black carbon emissions have been cut in half and NOx emissions have declined by 40 percent – just in one year.

And our requirements for ocean-going ships to switch to low sulfur fuels near the coast is reducing PM exposure in California and has reduced sulfur dioxide emissions – right here, in West Oakland – by 72%.

**We have more to do – describe ongoing and future efforts**

While we have made substantial progress, we still have much more to do to meet our integrated air quality and greenhouse gas reduction targets.

So we are embarking on a planning effort to create a more sustainable freight system in California—one that move goods with zero or near-zero emissions using cleaner, renewable transportation energy sources.

This year, we will consider adopting optional NOx emissions standards for on-road heavy-duty engines in order to encourage engine manufacturers to showcase new technologies that reduce NOx below the current mandatory standards.

And we will be working with the Federal government as they develop more stringent greenhouse gas and fuel-economy standards for heavy-duty vehicles.

**Close**

We’ve come a long way, but we must do more. The climate, health, and economic imperatives of reducing diesel and black carbon emissions are becoming ever more clear.

While some aspects of the respective challenges in California and India are distinct, the impact of emissions on health, global climate, and economic productivity are commonly shared. So we must work together to find solutions.

I look forward to continuing our partnership, sharing our experiences, and together – advancing our collective health and prosperity.