

New Port Service Trucks

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forth by the Clean Air Action Plan (CAAP) Update passed in November 2017. The regulation, expected to receive final approval this month, goes into effect October 1.

“Over the coming months, we’re planning to make sure we’ve got a good outreach campaign to let the industry know about the change,” Port of Long Beach Environmental Planning Director Heather Tomley said.

The regulation applies only to new trucks entering service. Older trucks currently registered in the Ports Drayage Truck Registry are allowed to continue service. However, CAAP guidelines will require every truck to pay a fee starting in mid-2020, unless they are zero or near-zero emissions, Tomley said. She added, “By 2035, when our goal is to have all trucks meet zero emissions standards, the only way not to pay the rate is to be a zero-emissions truck at that point.”

California Trucking Association (CTA) Director Alex Cherin said the organization is “generally supportive” of the new clean trucks program. CTA is the state’s largest trucking trade association.

“To give you some context, we’ve invested about \$1 billion in newer, cleaner trucks during the first iteration of the CAAP and the clean trucks program,” he said. “As an industry, we’ve shown that we’re willing to embrace new technology.”

But Weston LaBar, CEO of the Harbor Trucking Association (HTA) based in Long Beach, said his organization is not “one hundred percent happy” with the regulation. “If the goal is to meet emissions standards, we really should be testing the emissions of trucks and not just picking arbitrary years to say, ‘this truck is clean,’ and ‘this truck is dirty,’” he commented. HTA

is a partnership of L.A., Long Beach and Oakland intermodal carriers.

LaBar said that, while he does not have much concern about any cost to the trucking industry in October, the real issue may come about in 2020 because the zero-emissions technology is not commercially available at the present time. According to LaBar, this includes battery electric vehicles and vehicles powered by hydrogen fuel cells. However, several companies, such as Tesla and Toyota, are already testing these technologies on the road.

“Although some will become commercially available this year, when you have a fleet of over 16,000 vehicles registered in the San Pedro Bay ports, there becomes a much bigger issue when you start to look at who’s being charged with what fees and which trucks you can use,” LaBar explained. “You’re starting to shrink the availability of [trucks] to a situation where there may not be enough commercially available trucks for companies to meet those deadlines [that aren’t] subject to fees.”

LaBar also expressed concern that trucking companies could miss out on grant funding through the ports or agencies such as the South Coast Air Quality Management District if they upgrade now at their own cost. “Many companies and drivers are looking at holding onto the equipment they have today because, what systematically happens, if they voluntarily turn over their fleet to a newer fleet, they may find themselves next year being unable to upgrade.”

Tomley said the emissions goals are part of the overall program efforts of the Clean Air Action Program. “By 2050, we’d like greenhouse gas emissions from ports at 80% below 1990 levels. We’ve also adopted the 2030 standard of 40% below 1990 levels.” ■



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