

Harbor Takes Charge

■ To further clean the air, Harbor and AQMD start pilot program to study the use of ultra-clean electrically powered tractors to tow cargo around the harbor.

HARBOR — The Harbor, in collaboration with the South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD), are working on a demonstration project to use electrically powered tractors to tow cargo containers from the Port to local warehouses and rail yards. The \$527,000 initiative funded by the Port and AQMD, will explore the feasibility of replacing diesel-powered tractors with ultra-clean, electrically powered units.

Under the Clean Air Action Plan (CAAP) approved by the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach in November, \$15 million has been set aside for a Technology Advancement Program. The electric tow tractor demonstration project is the first project to be approved under this CAAP program component. AQMD has committed \$48 million to help replace older diesel trucks in addition to technology advancement projects such as the electric tractor. As part of the CAAP commitment, the Port has committed at least \$85 million over the next five years for truck replacement and retrofits.

"We believe that transporting cargo containers from the docks to nearby warehouses and rail yards can be done cleanly with heavy-duty electric vehicles," said Geraldine Knatz, Executive Director for the Harbor. "We are excited about this project and look forward to testing this technology in realistic conditions."

The project is slated for three main components, and is expected to be completed in about seven months. The three components of the project are:

- Develop a barebones chassis to test
- Complete chassis for initial road tests
- Demonstration phase

The basic parameters of the project will be to develop an all-electric tow tractor that will have:

- Fast-charging capabilities
- A top speed of 25 miles per hour
- A range of 40 miles per charge
- Sufficient torque and power to tow up to a 60,000 pound container

Balqon Corp. has been selected as the technology provider on this project. Balqon has more than 15 years experience in producing electric vehicles and will work with Spartan Truck Company on the truck trailers and related equipment.

In November, the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach approved an unprecedented joint action to improve air quality in the South Coast Air Basin called the Clean Air Action Plan. The sweeping five-year plan is a blueprint for the ports to significantly reduce the health risks posed by air pollution from port-related ships, trains, trucks, terminal equipment and harbor craft. Considered a "living document," the plan allows for updating as new technologies and processes become available.



Renderings of a possible electrically charged tow vehicle.

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