Oregon leads convoy of states toward cleaner trucks

Newly adopted rules will speed transition to electric & cleaner trucks, buses, and vans; inspire other states to follow

SALEM, Ore. -- School buses, package delivery vans, waste haulers, and semi-trucks gliding along roadways and through neighborhoods -- fueled by renewable electricity-- with no clattering diesel engines or clouds of harmful exhaust. This future is more in focus than ever for Oregon, with adoption of new rules today.

“Clean Trucks are an investment for a climate-smart future and a tremendous investment in public health, especially for low-income communities and Black, Indigenous, and communities of color, which are disproportionately located near highways and busy truck corridors where diesel pollution is most concentrated,” said Victoria Paykar, Oregon Transportation Policy Manager at Climate Solutions.

The Oregon Environmental Commission adopted the Advanced Clean Truck (ACT) Rule and the Heavy-Duty Omnibus (Low-NOx) Rule today as presented by staff at the Department of Environmental Quality to get more clean vehicles on the road.

Both of the rules apply to sales of new medium- and heavy-duty (MHD) vehicles, like trucks, buses, and vans. The ACT rule requires truck manufacturers to offer increasing percentages of new sales to be zero-emission MHD vehicles in Oregon, while the Low-NOx rule will require new fossil fuel-powered MHD engines to significantly reduce dangerous air pollution. Both rules begin in model year 2025. More information is available here.

“Clean truck rules are common-sense policies with huge impacts,” said NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council) Transportation Analyst Patricio Portillo. “When you look into the air quality issues in the state’s port cities and in towns along I-5, it’s clear that truck pollution is a big part of the problem. By making it easier for companies, school districts, and waste haulers to swap out diesel trucks for clean electric versions, Oregon can reduce its greenhouse gas emissions and clean up the air in communities that need it most.”

“We’re proud to stand alongside many other community and environmental groups in celebrating the EQC for adopting both of these rules. Transitioning to cleaner sustainable fuels and reducing pollution from those fossil fuel powered vehicles that remain in the market is an important step. It moves us closer to our climate goals and improves the health of communities all across the state,” said Diana Nuñez, Executive Director of Oregon Environmental Council.

"It has been almost 14 years since the Oregon Legislature directed state regulators to reduce diesel particulate pollution so that it would bring cancer risk below the EPA acceptable risk level in the state," said Mary Peveto, Executive Director of Neighbors for Clean Air. “DEQ acknowledged in 2019 it had
made little progress, with reductions less than 2% of the pollution needed to meet that health standard. Adopting the strongest standards for new trucks in our state is a significant step in the right direction for finally eradicating this environmental and public health injustice."

“Passage of the Advance Clean Truck Rule is critical key to ignite a cleaner transportation future in Oregon with the potential for high road jobs creation,” said Ranfis Giannettino Villatoro, “The reporting rule will help provide better data to inform future policy to further advance cleaner vehicles on our roads and support workers.”

“We can no longer settle for empty promises and piecemeal solutions. Access to affordable and non-polluting transportation systems is a lifeline and a critical component of a just transition off of fossil fuels,” said Aimée Okotie-Oyekan, Environmental and Climate Justice Coordinator for the NAACP Eugene-Springfield. “With Oregon’s diesel transportation sector having a disproportionate contribution to both greenhouse gas emissions and health disparities in frontline communities, the adoption of the Advanced Clean Truck Rules is a win for both climate and public health. Moving forward, Oregon must do all it can to ensure these regulations are followed by a suite of policies that make reparative investments in frontline communities and direct state resources towards building systems for clean air and water, living wage union jobs, a range of workforce services and skills training, and ethical cradle-to-grave renewable energy systems.”

“From the Coast Range to the high desert, Oregonians can breathe a bit easier with the adoption of these new clean truck rules,” said Sam Wilson, senior vehicles analyst at the Union of Concerned Scientists. “Increasing the availability of zero-emissions trucks and delivery vans will help to reduce climate warming and toxic air pollution from Oregon’s roads and highways. Oregon’s leadership in transitioning away from diesel engines towards cleaner electric options will improve public health and should encourage other states now considering similar actions.”

“Clean trucks, buses, and vans are Oregon’s transportation future and we must accelerate the transition from polluting diesel engines to affordable, reliable, zero-emissions electric vehicles to protect our health and improve equity for all,” said Sergio Lopez, Energy, Climate & Transportation Program Coordinator at Verde. “The Advanced Clean Truck Rule and the Heavy-Duty Omnibus Low-NOx Rule are an indicator of a cleaner and more resilient future for Oregonians. Today’s decision is a reflection of that, and Oregon can now include itself as a state that is taking a step in the right direction for the benefit of public health.”

“No community should be a sacrifice zone for the transport of goods. The exhaust from diesel trucks contributes to a range of harmful health impacts, particularly for the low-income communities and communities of color disproportionately exposed to vehicle pollution,” said Hieu Le, Sierra Club’s Campaign Representative. “The Environmental Quality Commission heard from Oregonians and acted swiftly. This rule is a significant step towards moving Oregon away from dirty diesel trucks and building healthier and safer communities across the state while tackling the climate crisis.”

“With today's decision, Oregon has established itself as a leader on clean transportation and taken an important step in building a more sustainable and equitable transportation system,” said Jennifer Helfrich, Senior Manager for State Policy at Ceres. “Major companies support the Advanced Clean Truck rule to increase the availability of clean vehicles for their supply chains. Many are already taking steps to turnover their fleets, but they need leading states to adopt strong policies to get this technology on the road at the scale and scope necessary to take on the climate crisis. We hope today's decision will help drive adoption elsewhere so that communities across the country can reap the major climate, public health, and business benefits of this technology.”

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
While Oregon is the first state to adopt these rules following their creation and adoption in California, five other states—Maine, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, and Washington—are considering adopting them this year, as well. These seven states contain more than 20-percent of the national fleet of medium- and heavy-duty trucks, according to Federal Highway Administration data. Adopting these rules could be so impactful as fleet owners have opportunities to upgrade to cleaner models over time if they choose.

Last year, Oregon joined 14 other states and the District of Columbia in setting a goal of 100-percent electric truck and bus sales by 2050. Adopting the ACT and HDO rules will accelerate this transition.

Oregon is behind our west coast neighbors on clean engine policy, so the oldest, most polluting trucks, buses, and vans are on our roads. Every year in Oregon, diesel engine exhaust is responsible for an estimated 176 premature deaths, 25,910 lost workdays, and annual costs from exposure of $3.5 billion. Oregonians pay for the damage from diesel pollution through medical bills and missed days of work and school due to illness, with the worst burdens falling on people with low incomes and Oregonians who are Black, Indigenous, and people of color.

**BENEFITS ANALYSIS**

Oregon will see a projected $21.2 billion in net societal benefits and avoid 84,000 respiratory illnesses by 2050 with the adoption of these two rules, according to an independent study by MJ Bradley & Associates. Societal benefits include avoided premature deaths, missed work days, and other medical expenses due to lower diesel pollution, as well as financial savings from the low cost of electric fuel, and high-quality jobs from investments in Oregon charging infrastructure.

The study found that Oregonians will see many health, climate, and economic benefits of the ACT and HDO rules by 2050, including:

- **Delivering net societal benefits of $21.2 billion**, including public health benefits and savings for fleet owners and utility customers.
- **Avoiding nearly 84,000 respiratory illnesses**, 160 premature deaths, and 120 hospital admissions and emergency room visits.
- **Reducing greenhouse gas emissions** from trucks and buses by 50 million metric tons, particulate matter by over 1,290 metric tons, and smog-forming nitrogen by nearly 223,300 tons cumulatively by 2050.
- **Saving household utility customers $70 annually** and commercial customers $410 per year on electricity bills.
- **Saving fleet owners more than $1 billion annually**, in part through savings on fuel and maintenance.
- **Attracting nearly $87 million annually in investments** in public electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

The report also found that the ACT and HDO rules would contribute to reducing truck and bus emissions by 93 percent for nitrogen oxides (NOx), by 83 percent for particulate matter (PM), and by 55 percent for greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs), compared with today’s emission levels.

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The Clean Air, Healthy Communities Coalition is a growing, multi-sector group of advocates with the goal of reducing public health impacts on Oregonians, ensuring Oregon achieves its greenhouse gas reduction targets in the transportation sector, and supporting a just transition.
("Electric Island" at Daimler Trucks, Portland, Oregon. Photo courtesy: Renew Oregon)

(Portland, OR-Vancouver WA metro area diesel pollution heatmap, courtesy OR Dept. of Environmental Quality)