

Cleaning Up Dirty Diesel Medium & Heavy-Duty Vehicles in New Jersey



New Jersey is the Garden State, but it is also the most highway-dense state in the country. The transportation sector accounts for more than 40 percent of greenhouse gases in the state, and, equally as important, cars, trucks and buses are the leading source of harmful air pollution. Commercial vehicles make up less than 10% of our road traffic, but are responsible for almost half of all toxic tailpipe pollution – 44% of emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx), a smog precursor, and 39% of fine particulate matter.

New Jersey's more than 420,000 trucks and buses produce an outsized amount of dangerous pollutants and these emissions disproportionately impact communities of color, according to data from the Union of Concerned Scientists. New Jersey is the 2nd worst state in the country in terms of

cancer risk from diesel soot. In 2023 alone, diesel pollution in New Jersey was responsible for more than 330 premature deaths, 19,900 lost days of work, and \$3.75 billion in monetized health damages. These health harms are significantly higher around the Port Authority of NY/NJ operations in Newark and Elizabeth, the largest port on the East Coast with over 20,000 daily truck trips, where nearby communities have asthma rates double the state average.

New Jersey has made strides to deal with pollution including having stronger than federal tailpipe pollution standards for 15 years. Additionally, the state adopted the Advanced Clean Trucks (ACT) program in 2021, which fully went into effect in January 2025. The program has been adopted by eleven states and is designed to have

manufacturer flexibility built into the program. The ACT rules will gradually increase the supply of pollution-free buses and trucks across the state (especially for garbage trucks and delivery vans, which drive through densely populated areas every day to deliver packages and pick up garbage) with increased manufacturer sales requirements for pollution free vehicles over a ten-year period from 2025 through 2035. The Murphy Administration also adopted a complementary Heavy-Duty Omnibus (HDO) rule to ensure that diesel vehicles sold during the transition to pollution-free vehicles are as clean as possible by requiring new trucks and buses to have reduced nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions.

To further jumpstart this transition, the Murphy Administration rolled out the NJ Zero Emissions Incentive Program (NJ ZIP) program through the NJ Economic Development Authority. NJ ZIP uses revenue dollars generated through the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) to fund vouchers incentives for the purchase of medium duty vehicles targeted in environmental justice communities. Additionally, the NJ Board of Public Utilities (NJBPU), rolled out the adoption of minimum filing requirements for utilities to expand charging infrastructure across NJ for medium and heavy-duty (MHD) vehicles, which is further bolstered by the \$250 million US EPA grant awarded to NJDEP to expand charging infrastructure on the Turnpike.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue to fully implement and defend Advanced Clean Trucks (ACT)

- Oppose efforts to delay implementation of ACT (currently S3817/4967) by the trucking industry, which are weaponizing truck dealers and spreading misinformation about the program even after successfully negotiating additional flexibility in the program
- Ensure compliance of ACT goals now that the program is in effect (nearly all vehicle classes are in full compliance as of 2024)
- Defend the 2023 EPA waiver that allowed NJ to adopt ACT, which is expected to be legally challenged by Trump Administration, and strongly oppose any efforts to not allow states to adopt stronger programs than the federal EPA

Adopt Advanced Clean Fleet (ACF) regulations that don't require federal approval

- Adopt the portions of ACF regulations from California's law that do not require an EPA waiver and that focus on state and local governments
- Prepare the outreach and stakeholdering materials enabling the state to quickly scale up efforts for potential ACF adoption for larger vehicle fleets in the event the EPA grants California the waiver for the larger program

Implement Indirect Source Review (ISR) for ports, warehouses, and community truck traffic

- Take regulatory action or pass legislation (currently S3546/A4679) to adopt comprehensive ISR policies, which are a holistic flexible strategy to mandate reduce emissions from truck traffic entering and leaving facilities, including large industrial centers like ports, warehouses, and where large volumes of trucks congregate and create micro diesel death zones
- Require additional and faster mandates for communities in already overburdened communities as a part of ISR policies

Establish Zero Emission Zones at the port and along designated truck corridors

- Use gubernatorial powers and incentives to move the Port Authority of NY/NJ more aggressively towards zero emissions
- Promote "zero emission zones" or corridors where electrification of trucks, equipment, and warehouses are mandated both at the port and in port adjacent communities where goods movement and operations are concentrated

Electrify and retrofit vehicles under state contracts

- Issue executive order or pass legislation to require retrofitting emission controls, engine upgrades, repowering, and/or electrification of diesel equipment used under state contracts to reduce air pollution impacts for impacted communities and workers

Move Forward with Regular Utility Filings for MHD Charging Infrastructure

- Direct NJBPU to begin holding regular filings from utilities to fill in gaps for public charging hot-spots for MHD vehicles that meet the demand of the growing market now that the straw proposal for minimum filing requirements for MHD charging infrastructure received Board approval in 2024 and the first filing process has kicked off in 2025
- Re-evaluate the budget caps of the filings
 - Incorporate public health benefits and amortize costs over multiple years
 - Allows utilities to invest annually based on approved program structures to mitigate ratepayer costs

Establish a weight exemption for electric heavy-duty trucks similar to the exemption that has already been applied to natural gas-fueled trucks

- Adopt a 2,000 lbs. gross vehicle weight exemption for electric trucks, consistent with the federal exemption and similar exemptions in other states