

# State Adopts Tough Diesel Rules

By Samantha Young, The Associated Press

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SACRAMENTO - California, plagued by smoggy skies and rising asthma rates, on Friday adopted the nation's toughest diesel-emission standards for the trucks and buses that crowd its highways.

The state Air Resources Board unanimously approved the new rule despite warnings that it could cause many of the state's small trucking companies to stop operating. Many of them rely on the older, dirtier vehicles targeted by the change.

The regulation comes one day after the board adopted a sweeping plan to reduce the state's greenhouse gases, which is expected to change everything from the way factories operate to the fuel Californians put in their vehicles.

Starting in 2011, the diesel rules will speed up the replacement of thousands of polluting trucks and buses that stay on the road for decades and are not as clean as newer models with tougher, federally mandated emissions standards.

More than 250 witnesses jammed the board's meeting during two days of testimony on the rule.

Schoolchildren from Oakland, farm workers and physicians from the San Joaquin Valley and representatives from environmental groups urged regulators to adopt the most sweeping diesel rule in more than a decade.

Truckers, loggers, independent dump truck and bus drivers and representatives of rural counties demanded that the board delay what they called prohibitive regulations during a worsening economic recession.

Board Chairwoman Mary Nichols said California has a legal obligation to clean up pollution and meet federal air standards. Failing to meet those targets could cost California an estimated \$2 billion in federal transportation funding.

"I don't think anyone, no matter how committed they are to the cause of public health, truly believes that massive unemployment or large-scale bankruptcies of businesses are good for public health or for the economy," Nichols said. "We are going to be looking for every possible way to make this rule feasible and livable."

Air regulators estimated that the emissions standards would cost businesses, school districts and transit agencies \$5.5 billion over 16 years.

Heavy-duty trucks are the leading cause of diesel pollution in a state with some of the worst pollution in the country. The new rules will reduce ozone-eating nitrogen oxides and soot-forming particulate matter that can become embedded in lung tissue.

Nearly a million vehicles will have to be replaced or retrofitted with smog traps, filters or cleaner-burning technology beginning in 2011. By 2014, all trucks must have soot filters, and by the time the rule is fully implemented in 2023, no truck or bus in California could be older than 13 years unless it had equipment to cut nitrogen oxide emissions.

Generally, the rule applies to any vehicle larger than a double-wheel Ford F-350 pickup truck, including those that come to California from other states, Canada and Mexico.

Tractor-trailers, dump trucks, street sweepers, cranes, fuel delivery trucks, school buses, motor coaches and airport shuttles all must comply. Some military, emergency and vintage vehicles would be exempt, along with private motor homes, snow plows and those driven fewer than 1,000 miles a year.