

The Greening of Large Trucks Begins at California's Ports

A Planetizen blog post by Casey Brazeal asks, "When will the trucking industry electrify?" Three truck manufacturers and electric truck builder BYD Motors are now in competition thanks to a \$23.6 million state grant to the South Coast Air District.

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By [Irvin Dawid](#)



On [April 26](#), Planetizen blogger [Casey Brazeal](#) wrote, "Now it's time for someone to follow Tesla's lead and bring electrification to the trucking industry." A week later, the [Advanced Clean Technology \(ACT\) Expo](#), "the largest clean fleet event," convened at the Long Beach Convention Center where companies showed off their clean fuels and clean vehicles, including battery-powered heavy trucks.

During the event, on May 4, it was announced that \$23.6 million would go "to the [South Coast Air Quality Management District](#) (SCAQMD), the air pollution control agency for an area that includes the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles, the busiest port complex in the country," writes [Jim Mele](#), editor-in-chief of *Fleet Owner*.

SCAQMD will in turn provide grants to Kenworth Truck Co, Peterbilt Motors, Volvo Group North America and electric truck builder [BYD](#) Motors. The four will build 43 zero-emissions battery electric and plug-in hybrid drayage trucks that will be put into demonstration trials in Long Beach/Los Angeles as well as four other areas around the state. Charging infrastructure will also be created as part of the demonstration.

"Drayage trucks are short-haul vehicles used in ports, rail yards and surrounding areas to transport goods, often between ships and trains," [writes](#) Seth Sparks for *TRUCKS.com* on the grant announcement.

Public Health a Priority

Benefits are not just measured in reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

"[T]ruck and freight activity accounts for roughly half of the [diesel particulate matter](#) and 45% of the ozone forming [NOx emissions](#) in the state, according to [Joe Buscaino](#) [who spoke at the ACT Expo press event], the Los Angeles City councilman representing the port district," adds Mele.

[CARB Chair Mary D. Nichols](#) emphasized that point in the [SCAQMD press release](#):

"This project will help put the very cleanest short-haul trucks to work where they are needed most, moving cargo from the state's biggest ports to distribution centers and rail yards," said Nichols. "This is good news – and cleaner air – for all Californians, but especially those who live in neighborhoods next to these industrial facilities or along some of our state's busiest trade corridors."

The press release states that SCAQMD "is teaming up with air districts in the [Bay Area](#), [Sacramento](#), [San Diego](#) and [San Joaquin Valley](#) to make the project a statewide demonstration..."

The grant is from a [California Air Resources Board](#)'s (CARB) mobile source incentive program called the [Low Carbon Transportation Investments and Air Quality Improvement Program](#). Funding comes from [auction proceeds from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund](#) from the nation's only state [cap-and-trade program](#).

California Sustainable Freight Action Plan ([website](#))

The day before the grant was announced, the state's seven interagency partners (noted below) released a draft of the [California Sustainable Freight Action Plan](#). "[S]ubject to a two-month [comment](#) period, [it] calls for the deployment of more than 100,000 zero- and near-zero emissions

trucks, locomotives, harbor craft, airport ground service vehicles and other freight-moving equipment throughout the state by 2030," [writes](#) John O'Dell for *TRUCKS.com*. "Significant cuts in emissions from the freight segment by 2050 are another goal."

According to the [press release \[PDF\]](#), the plan was "[d]eveloped in response to Governor Brown's [Executive Order B-32-15](#), which calls for a single integrated action plan for California, the Draft Action Plan was drafted by the California State Transportation Agency, California Environmental Protection Agency, Natural Resources Agency, California Air Resources Board, California Department of Transportation, California Energy Commission and Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development with broad stakeholder input."

Special Mention of BYD

Returning to Casey Brazeal's [blog post](#), China-based BYD could well be on its way to becoming the Tesla of the trucking industry, according to a May 3 [article](#) by *Clean Technica's* [Kyle Field](#) about the ACT Expo.

While Tesla may have the lock on electric vehicles for personal use, BYD has its sights set on the commercial side of things and is charging forward at a staggering pace.

At the Advanced Clean Transportation Expo in Long Beach today, BYD is blowing the lid off of a program that's been in the works for a long time — it is bringing a full array of electric trucks to market which are aimed directly at one of the key sources of PM2.5 and PM10 pollution in our cities — diesel trucks.

As of October 2015, BYD replaced Nissan as the "World's No. 1 Battery-Electric Vehicle Manufacturer by sales volumes," according to a December 23, 2015 *Business Insider* [article](#). "Altogether, BYD sold a total of 61,722 vehicles with plugs last year--all but a tiny handful in China," states a January 2016 [BYD news article](#).

More on the [Tesla comparison](#) by [Steve Hanley](#) for [Gas2](#):

Unlike Tesla, which is committed to starting at the top of the market and working its way down, BYD has a plan to take virtually everything on wheels and convert it to electric power. BYD is already the world leader in electric buses. It will deliver about 6,000 of them in 2016, of which 300 will be manufactured at its [Bus & Coach Factory in Lancaster, Calif.](#) It has a fleet of electric taxis operating in Chicago and plans to expand its e-taxi service to New York City.

Hat tip to Metro's [L.A. Transportation Headlines](#).

FULL STORY: [California awards \\$23.6 million for clean drayage trucks](#)

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