

[Tuesday, May 11, San Francisco Chronicle](#)

**New EPA rules to cut diesel soot
Regulations for nonroad vehicles require cleaner fuel, slashing emissions
by 90%**

Michael Janofsky, New York Times

Washington -- The Bush administration announced new regulations on Monday that will significantly reduce emissions from tractors, bulldozers, locomotives, barges and other nonroad vehicles propelled by diesel fuel that, altogether, spew more soot than the nation's entire fleet of cars, trucks and buses.

Michael Leavitt, administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, said after a meeting with President Bush that the regulations would be made official today, setting in motion a plan for full compliance by 2012. The new regulations require refineries to produce cleaner-burning diesel fuel and engine makers to cut diesel emissions by more than 90 percent, a reduction that health experts say could prevent as many as 12,000 premature deaths and 15,000 heart attacks every year.

"This is a big deal," Leavitt said Monday, comparing the importance of the new diesel standards with regulations decades ago that took lead out of gasoline. "The result of this is that people will live longer, live better and live healthier lives."

The new regulations were developed through years of collaboration among environmental groups, public health advocates, engine makers and fuel refineries. Representatives from all of the groups said the adoption of the new standards reflected an extraordinary -- and unusual -- willingness by the EPA to listen to everybody.

"The process they used was unlike any other process I've ever seen," said Bill Becker, executive director of two groups that represent state and local air pollution agencies. "They opened the door, let everybody in and made us all feel like the favorite child of the parent."

The goal of the new standards is to lower the sulfur content of diesel fuel that is used in engines as large as 6,000 horsepower. Sulfur not only leads to more particulate matter -- better known as soot -- in the atmosphere, but also prevents newer engine technologies from reducing the levels of other pollutants.

Stronger regulations for buses and trucks that use diesel fuel were adopted in the final days of the Clinton administration and kept in place by Bush, with implementation set for 2007.

The new regulations build on that effort, with all nonroad diesel vehicles except for locomotives and marine vessels, required to reduce the sulfur content of diesel fuel to 500 parts per million by 2007 and to 15 ppm by 2010. Locomotives and boats have until 2012 to reach the lower standard.

Currently, the average level of sulfur content is 3,400 ppm.

The EPA predicts that once the current fleet of diesel-powered engines is retired, the level of nitrogen oxides would be reduced by 738,000 tons annually and the level of soot by 129,000 tons.

Industry leaders, as well as environmentalists, said progress toward the new regulations came about through several factors, including public pressure on the administration to produce tangible evidence of interest in cleaning the air, a willingness of refineries and engine-makers to bear the enormous costs of improvement in exchange for a longer phase-in period and a realization by environmental groups that the new standards will have a substantial health benefit even if they take some years to implement.

"This means a huge investment for us, in the billions," said Edward Murphy, an official with the American Petroleum Institute. "We're concerned about the cost, but it's worthwhile because the environmental benefits justify it."

Jed Mandel, a spokesman for the Engine Manufacturers Association, a trade organization, said, "The industry members are committing themselves to developing new products, not fighting the idea of getting more emission reductions."

[Tuesday, May 11, Fresno Bee](#)

Tough federal rules on diesel emissions to help clean air

By Juliet Eilperin - Washington Post

WASHINGTON -- The Bush administration announced tough new rules Monday to curb harmful emissions from off-road diesel-powered vehicles, pleasing environmentalists after brokering a compromise with industry on deadlines.

Off-road diesel-powered vehicles, such as bulldozers, tractors and irrigation equipment, are among the largest sources of pollutants that scientists have linked to premature deaths, lung cancer, asthma and other serious respiratory illnesses. The regulations, which Environmental Protection Agency director Mike Leavitt will sign today, would reduce the emissions of nitrogen oxide and other pollutants from diesel engines by more than 90% over the next eight years.

But the new federal rule will take effect a year after California's strict diesel requirements are enforced. In the San Joaquin Valley, farm diesel equipment accounts for about one-third of the smog-making gases coming from off-road diesel engines, according to state figures.

Cleaner diesel fuel from refineries will help the Valley clean up, said one local air quality official.

"It's a step in the right direction," said Tom Jordan, senior air quality planner for the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. "The federal rule will mean any off-road diesel that comes into California must use the same diesel as we do here."

New manufacturing standards will provide cleaner engines, starting in 2008. But, since many of the current diesel engines are very durable, it may take years before they are replaced with the cleaner versions, officials said.

"This is a big deal," Leavitt said outside the White House after he briefed President Bush on the matter. "Nearly everyone will remember when we took the lead out of gasoline. We are now going to take sulfur out of diesel. The black puff of smoke will be a thing of the past."

While the administration usually comes under criticism from environmentalists, Monday's announcement brought plaudits from members of the green community, who said the rules would protect public health by preventing deaths, heart attacks and asthma-related emergencies.

"It's remarkable that these strong rules come from the same administration that has otherwise turned back the clock on 30 years of environmental progress," said Emily Figdor, a clean-air advocate for the U.S. Public Interest Research Group. "It's great to see science win out over the special interests for a change." In recent years scientists and environmentalists have focused on the dangers associated with high sulfur levels in non-road diesel fuel, which produce harmful microscopic pollution particles that invade the lungs and cause cancer, asthma and other respiratory illnesses. EPA officials predict that within 30 years, the new regulations will prevent more than 12,000 premature deaths and will save billions of dollars annually in hospital and medical costs, as well as lost workdays.

The new rules require oil refiners to reduce the sulfur in nonroad diesel fuel by 99% from its current level of 3,400 parts per million to 500 parts per million in 2007 and to 15 ppm in 2010. It allows a slightly longer time line for locomotive and marine engines, reducing sulfur to 15 ppm in 2012. Figdor and other environmentalists criticized this delay, saying it was the one area in which the administration bowed to industry's wishes.

"With an opportunity to score a slam dunk, at the last minute the Bush administration committed an unnecessary foul," said Frank O'Donnell, executive director of the Clean Air Trust. "It caved in behind closed doors to political pressure from oil companies and delayed cleanup for fuel used in marine and train engines."

For the most part, public health advocates and environmentalists embraced the administration's move.

"This rule will help protect seniors, children and people with lung diseases, including asthma, who are the most vulnerable to the harm from air pollution," said John L. Kirkwood, chief executive of the American Lung Association. "More than one in four Americans live in areas with unhealthy levels of particle pollution."

The Fresno Bee contributed to this report.

[Tuesday, May 11, 2004, LA Times -](#)

**White House Announces New Regulation for Diesel Engines
Even critics praise the plan to reduce 90% of harmful pollution from off-road vehicles. The EPA says it should prevent illness.**

By Elizabeth Shogren, Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON - The Bush administration Monday announced a regulation that within a decade would cut 90% of the harmful pollution from construction equipment, farm equipment and other off-road diesel engines and 99% of the sulfur from the fuel they use.

"It's a big moment in terms of clean air history," Environmental Protection Agency administrator Mike Leavitt said. "That black puff of diesel smoke will be a thing of the past."

The regulation is expected to prevent 12,000 premature deaths, 15,000 heart attacks and 6,000 asthma-related emergency room visits for children every year, according to the EPA.

Even many of the administration's usual critics praised the regulation, which is expected to be signed today, as the best thing President Bush had done for the environment.

"This rule provides greater environmental benefits than any other decision this administration has made," said S. William Becker, executive director of the State and Territorial Air Pollution Program Administrators and the Assn. of Local Air Pollution Control Officials.

After being attacked for adopting policies described by environmental groups as too friendly to industries, the administration experienced a rare day of praise from those same organizations.

"By working together effectively with both industry and environmentalists, EPA has developed these strong pollution rules that will help protect the millions of Americans suffering from asthma and all Americans that are hard hit by the pollution from diesel exhaust," said Fred Krupp, president of Environmental Defense, a national environmental organization.

Almost as striking as the support from environmentalists were the comments from the industries that would be subject to the aggressive new regulation.

"The diesel industry is committed to being part of the clean air solution," said Allen Schaeffer, executive director of the Diesel Technology Forum, which represents diesel refiners and engine manufacturers.

In California, where such diesel engines are among the biggest polluters and have been off limits to state regulators, the change should lead to cleaner air.

"For California, this is a huge breath of fresh air," said Jerry Martin, spokesman for the California Air Resources Board.

The regulation is similar to one adopted by the Clinton administration and approved by the Bush administration to drastically cut emissions from diesel trucks and buses.

Diesel exhaust is particularly harmful because it is linked to lung cancer and other ailments, mostly affecting the respiratory system.

The regulation would require the removal of 99% of the sulfur in the diesel fuel for off-road engines; it also would require controls on those engines to remove other pollutants, such as smog-forming nitrogen oxide. About 650,000 such engines are sold every year in backhoes, tractors, heavy forklifts, airport service vehicles and generators.

Nationwide, these engines are responsible for 60% of the total diesel particulate-matter pollution and 30% of the nitrogen oxide emitted from all mobile sources of pollution, which also include cars, trucks, buses and airplanes. People exposed to high levels of smog, the common name for ground-level ozone, can suffer from aggravated asthma, reduced lung function and chronic lung diseases.

Particulates contribute to haze and cause serious health problems, including premature deaths, heart and lung ailments and aggravated asthma.

The fuel would be cleaned up in two stages - first from its uncontrolled level of 3,400 parts of sulfur per million to 500 parts per million by 2007, then to 15 parts per million by 2010.

The regulation also requires diesel locomotives and commercial marine vessels, such as tugboats and river barges, to start using the cleaner fuel, but it gives them two more years to meet the goal of 15 parts per million.

The regulation does not require pollution controls on locomotives and marine vessels, but the EPA says it plans to propose additional regulations that would require these vessels to become cleaner, perhaps as early as 2011.

Depending on the type of engine, manufacturers will be required to start selling engines with pollution controls as early as 2008. All the engines will have to comply with the new requirements by 2014. By 2030, the EPA predicted, all the engines in use will be the new clean engines.

The regulation announced Monday also would help communities meet new, more stringent health-based standards for smog and fine particulates.

More than half the U.S. population, including 90% of Californians, live in areas with unhealthful levels of smog, according to the EPA's new standard, which was set last month. About 65 million Americans live in areas with unhealthful levels of particulates.

Representatives from both environmental groups and industry said the rule was a rare one that made everyone happy because the administration involved a broad coalition.

"From the beginning, this rule was worked on together, collaboratively, with a wide range of stakeholders," Schaeffer said.

The refining industry adjusted to the regulation because the Bush administration agreed to a two-stage cleanup.

"We know there's an inexorable march to cleaner and cleaner fuels," said Charles Drevna, director of advocacy for the National Petrochemical and Refiners Assn. "Our problem was in timing and scope."

Environmental and health advocates were pleased because the final goal was so stringent.

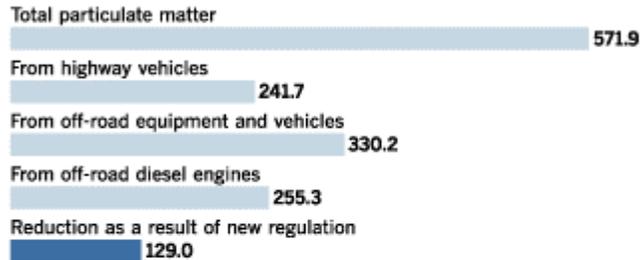
The administration has not followed a collaborative approach on other regulations that have been the subject of great criticism from environmental and health advocates, such as one regulating mercury emissions from power plants and another that gives polluters greater leeway to renovate their old plants without installing modern pollution controls.

"It's quite remarkable that these strong rules come from the same administration that has otherwise rolled back the clock on 30 years of environmental progress," said Emily Figdor, a clean air advocate for Environment California.

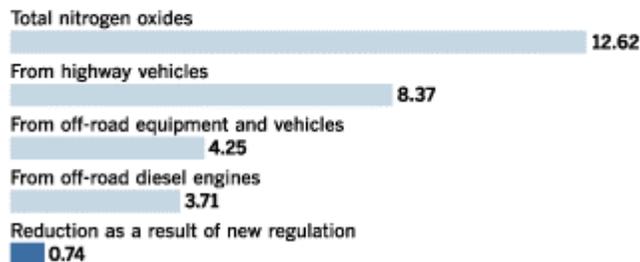
Cleaning the air

Off-road diesel engines are major sources of air pollution, releasing smog-forming nitrogen oxides and particulate matter into the air. When inhaled, the particles can cause or worsen a variety of health problems.

Particulate matter* from vehicles in the U.S., in thousands of tons:



Nitrogen oxide from vehicles in the U.S., in millions of tons:



*Measuring less than or equal to 10 microns in diameter

Figures are for 1999, the most recent available

Source: *Union of Concerned Scientists*

DOUG STEVENS *Los Angeles Times*

[Sunday, May 9, Bakersfield Californian Letters to the Editor](#)

Shafter has 'dairy air'

We have the worst air quality and dairy expansion in Shafter. Big deal.

We need a better slogan: "Stick your nose in our dairy-aire."

-- JOYCE VANCE, Lake Isabella

[Friday, May 7, 2004 Tri-Valley Herald -](#)

New program to mow down air pollution

Discount plan will give San Joaquin residents coupons for lawn mowers

By Dave Myhra - SAN JOAQUIN BUREAU

A new environmentally friendly lawn mower will be cheaper for four days in June, thanks to the "Clean Green Yard Machine" program.

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, along with partners Orchard Supply Hardware, Black & Decker, and American Lawn Mower Co., combined

forces in the program to kick off the "Spare the Air" season by offering discounts on lawn mowers.

Residents may get in on the programs by contacting the district for a coupon and then going into any OSH store to buy either an electric or a push-reel lawn mower. Participants can get up to an \$88 discount on electric mowers, and up to 50 percent off of the reel mowers.

This is not a trade-in program as in past years, said Janelle Schneider, a public education representative for the effort. The event is for San Joaquin Valley residents and will be available for four days only, from June 5 to June 8.

The program is being held as a lead up to the summer's "Spare the Air Days," which begin on June 8, which is a voluntary program that asks residents not to use their fireplaces and to restrict their usage of motor vehicles during the worst air-pollution days of the summer.

This program is aimed at getting residents to quit using gas lawn mowers, which can produce as much pollution as about 40 late-model cars. The mowers offered through the program produce no pollutants, and are easier to maintain, the air district said.

This program is another way the air district is attempting to clean up the Valley's air pollution problems.

The air in the San Joaquin Valley is labeled as "extreme" non-attainment, the worst designation that is given by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The only other area in the country with this designation is around Los Angeles. Valley residents who are interested in the "Clean Green Yard Machine" program should contact the district as soon as possible, because funding is limited.

The district estimates that, depending on the types of mowers people buy, it only will have about 8,000 coupons to issue.

For more information, visit the district's Web site at www.valleyair.org <<http://www.valleyair.org>>, or call the North District Office at (209) 557-6400.

[Thursday, May 5, Environmental Protection Magazine](#)

EPA approves plan for San Joaquin air

EPA is approving the San Joaquin air district's 2003 plan to reduce particulate matter pollution in the Valley.

"This plan includes specific commitments that will result in immediate and future progress," said Deborah Jordan, EPA's air division director for the Pacific Southwest region. "The district has already begun implementing this comprehensive plan, which asks Valley residents and businesses - construction

companies, growers, industrial sources and homeowners with fireplaces - to do their part to clean up the air."

Coupled with state and federal mobile source emission standards, the plan will help the Valley to attain the federal PM-10 standards by 2010, agency officials said.

California submitted the plan to the EPA last year. EPA proposed approving the plan in January and opened a public comment period in February. The state and district have committed to update the plan in 2006 when more data becomes available.

The Valley has the third highest average annual concentrations of fine particulate matter nationwide, ranking only behind Phoenix, Ariz., and the greater Los Angeles area. Sources of particulate air pollution in the San Joaquin Valley include dust, which is kicked up into the air from vehicle traffic and from disturbed areas, and pollution from diesel trucks, power plants and manufacturing facilities, which reacts in the atmosphere to form particulate air pollution.