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Port of San Diego celebrates shore-power system installation

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The Unified Port District of San Diego has successfully switched on its new shore-power system at the Tenth Avenue Marine Terminal, designed to improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by allowing cargo vessels to “plug in,” rather than run their diesel engines while in port.

Construction on the \$4.25 million project began in mid-2013 and was funded by the Port’s capital improvement program.

The contractor was NWest Construction in San Diego. On Feb. 24, a ribbon-cutting ceremony was held at the Tenth Avenue Marine Terminal, celebrating the completion of the Port of San Diego’s shore-power project.

“The Port District is proud to be a leader in environmental issues and continues to be a great steward of San Diego Bay,” said Bob Nelson, chairman of the Board of Port Commissioners. “By offering shore power, we not only improve air quality for communities nearby, but we also reduce our impact on the planet.”

According to Port District officials, the installation of shore power has many substantial environmental benefits:

- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions by more than 50 percent (more than 2,000 metric tons) per year. That’s equivalent to greenhouse gas emissions from about 1,500 cars per year;
- Reducing emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx; an air pollutant) by about 95 percent, or 70 tons per year. That’s equivalent to NOx emissions from over 4,000 cars per year.

Joining Nelson during the dedication ceremony were various other speakers, including U.S. Congressman Scott Peters, city of San Diego interim mayor Todd Gloria, Dole Company vice President Stuart Jablon and Diane Takvorian, executive director of the Environmental Health Coalition.

The new shore power system will allow refrigerated cargo ships — including those from Dole Fresh Fruit — to “plug in” and use electrical power from SDG&E instead of relying on diesel-fuel engines while at berth.

The project fulfills a mandate set forth by the California Air Resources Board requiring California ports and terminals to provide shore power to container, passenger and refrigerated-cargo ships.

The Port of San Diego is already equipped to provide shore power to cruise ships that berth at both its B Street Pier Cruise Ship Terminal and Broadway Pier.

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