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# Port cuts air pollution

By Deborah Sullivan Brennan (/staff/deborah-brennan/) 6:02

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The Tenth Avenue Marine Terminal is a 96 acres multi-purpose eight berth facility on San Diego Bay. — K.C. Alfred

The Port of San Diego reduced greenhouse gas emissions from its ships and facilities by 42 percent between 2009 and 2013, and cut other pollutants by more than half during that time, the port is expected to

In addition to trimming climate pollutants, the port cut nitrogen oxides — a component of smog — by 50 percent, diesel particles by 75 percent, and sulfur dioxide by 94 percent.

Those pollutants are associated with asthma and other respiratory conditions, heart problems and cancer.

“It’s really great for our local community, because we’re reducing local pollutants that have health impacts,” said Cody Hooven, a senior environmental specialist for the port. “Concurrently, we’re also reducing greenhouse emissions, which are important globally.”

About 70 percent of San Diego’s air emissions come from mobile sources, including planes, trains, trucks cars and boats, said Bob Kard, air pollution control officer for the San Diego Air Pollution Control District.

“The more everyone does in reducing mobile source emissions, the better off we’re going to be,” he said.

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The drop in emissions came about through a combination of state air pollution rules, local programs and some unexpected help from the recession, which eased pollution by dampening port activity.

The port based its comparison on 2006, the year when it began an outreach effort among its tenants and other businesses to identify ways to reduce pollution. That year became the baseline for future comparisons, Hooven said.

The six years that followed ushered in changes that helped trim pollutants from cruise ships, freighters, trucks and other equipment at the port.

“Obviously that’s good news for workers at the waterfront as well as residents downwind,” said Joy Williams, research director for the Environmental Health Coalition, a nonprofit that addresses public health issues in San Diego. “That is good for cleaner technologies.”

Some of those changes were mandated by the state Air Resources Board, which laid out steps that ports must take to cut diesel exhaust and convert to clean energy sources.

For instance, its 2009 rules that required cleaner fuels for ocean going ships cut the amount of sulfur dioxide they emitted in San Diego by 94 percent and trimmed particulates by 89 percent, according to an emissions inventory prepared by the port.

State-ordered engine upgrades on harbor craft also drove the transition to cleaner vessels.

In some cases, though, the Port of San Diego raised the bar for ships and tenants at its facilities.

The biggest recent investment was “shore power,” the infrastructure that allows visiting ships to hook up to electrical sources at dock, instead of idling indefinitely in port. By getting power from the grid rather than from diesel engines, the ships reduced diesel exhaust and other emissions.

Although the state required ports to switch to shore power by 2014, the port began its conversion in 2011, investing \$7.1 million to provide that service at its cruise ship terminal.

And it spent \$4.25 million to install it at the 10th Avenue Marine Terminal, using a \$2.4 million grant from the Air Pollution Control District to complete that project.

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**Nancy Yuen** · Top Commenter · UCSD Extension

It is good that the Port is reducing its direct pollution impact. However, it still remains to be legislated that the shore (electric) power that ships are now required to use will be generated using nonpolluting sources, such as solar and ocean wave technologies, especially in sunny, coastal San Diego.

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**Masada Disenhouse** · Top Commenter

Great to see the Port is making efforts to reduce its carbon emissions and also air pollutants that harm neighboring residents. Look forward to the Port figuring out how to utilize community choice energy in order to control its energy choices and bring down its carbon and pollution footprint even more.

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