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New Mexico to Use \$1.73 Million from EPA for Reducing Diesel Emissions and Creating New Jobs

Money Will Pay for Projects that Reduce Pollution in Albuquerque, Santa Fe and Los Alamos

(Santa Fe) — The State of New Mexico will begin implementing projects with \$1.73 million in federal stimulus money to reduce diesel emissions in the cities of Albuquerque, Los Alamos and Santa Fe.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency provided the money through the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act of 2009 to help New Mexico reduce pollutants created by diesel engines in local communities.

“The money will help create cleaner air for our municipalities and dramatically reduce toxic air pollutants that lead to a number of health problems,” Governor Richardson said. “The New Mexico Environment Department will work with Albuquerque, Los Alamos and Santa Fe to immediately begin those projects.”

“The funding will pay for reductions of diesel emissions from municipal fleet vehicles that create toxic emissions in local areas,” said New Mexico Environment Department Secretary Ron Curry. “We will also apply for another \$1 million in EPA grant money to expand this program to other parts of the state.”

The money will pay for a collective 200 diesel retrofits that will reduce those emissions from vehicles by 20 percent. Retrofitted vehicles include garbage trucks, heavy equipment, street sweepers and off-road vehicles. The projects include retrofitting 130 vehicles for the City of Santa Fe, retrofitting 50 engines for Los Alamos and repowering 25 diesel engines for the City of Albuquerque. Repowering engines involves replacing older engines with new cleaner equipment. The equipment will help improve pollution created by idling vehicles.

Particulates created by diesel emission have been linked to many health problems, including respiratory issues. The projects will also reduce premature deaths, asthma attacks and other respiratory ailments, lost work days, and other health impacts every year, according to EPA. It is estimated that the health benefits from diesel emissions reductions outweigh the costs by a ratio of up to 13-to-1.

The department selected cities to be involved in the projects that were able to implement the program quickly. In addition, the department’s Air Quality Bureau will begin a clean diesel retrofitting project on school buses in the Farmington School District this summer. That project involves retrofitting 55 school buses.

The EPA also awarded money to other states that will collectively address 11 million diesel engines across the state. Those projects will spur job creation in the state.

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