

Oregon soon could require zero emissions trucks

Advocates for Advanced Clean Truck rule tout benefits to air quality, health

By **MONICA SAMAYOA**
Oregon Public Broadcasting

SALEM — An Oregon regulatory panel is set to vote Wednesday, Nov. 17, on whether to require the gradual shift of medium and heavy-duty trucks from fossil fuels to electric power, starting in 2024.

The Oregon Environmental Quality Commission also is considering rules to reduce transportation related greenhouse gas emissions and to reduce harmful air pollutants coming from the same emissions.

The Department of Environmental Quality's senior air quality planner Rachel Sakata said it's urgent that Oregon reduce greenhouse



Oregon Public Broadcasting/Contributed Photo
Daimler's eCascadia and the eM2 are two of the first electric semitrailer to hit the highways.

gas emissions and pollutants that could cause asthma and other respiratory illnesses. She said trucks are among Oregon's fastest-growing sources of carbon emission.

"Transportation basically accounts for 40% of statewide greenhouse gas emis-

sions in Oregon," she said. "So, while heavy duty trucks and busses which are usually filled by diesel, only account for 4% of vehicles on the road nationally, they're responsible for 23% of greenhouse gas emissions in Oregon."

The continued burning of

fossil fuels is contributing to higher average temperatures and several consequences: more intense storm events, drought, more severe wildfire seasons and the threat of extinction for wildlife that can't adapt to a rapidly warming planet.

The proposed Advanced Clean Truck rule would require manufacturers of medium and heavy-duty vehicles, like large pickups, busses and 18-wheelers, to sell a certain percentage of zero emissions electric vehicles starting with the 2025 model year.

"It starts at various percentages based on the different class types of trucks," Sakata said.

For example, she said manufacturers of pickups and vans would need to see that zero-emission vehicles make up 7% of their Oregon sales starting in 2024. By 2035, manufacturers of all types of trucks, vans and busses would need zero-emission vehicles to make up at least 40% of their Oregon sales.

Sakata said the gradual ramp up is important to help manufacturers make the transition.

"It recognizes the tractor trailer trucks will take a little more time and may

not necessarily be able to switch over completely to the zero-emissions vehicle technology," she said.

Climate Solutions' Oregon transportation policy manager Victoria Paykar said if the rules are adopted, they not only will help get Oregon to reduce its dependence on fossil fuels, they will be a huge investment in public health.

"Currently, Oregon has a huge diesel problem, and we have one of the dirtiest fleets as a state in the nation," Paykar said. "We do have a lot of communities who are suffering from diesel pollution burdens."

Paykar said low-income communities and Black, Indigenous and communities of color are disproportionately affected by air pollution due to historically racist public land use laws and transportation policies. She said many of these communities are located near if not adjacent to highways and industrial zones.

Gov. Brown weighs special session on tenant protections, rental aid

By **PETER WONG**
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — Gov. Kate Brown said Friday, Nov. 12, she is considering calling a special session of the Oregon Legislature to extend legal protections for tenants at risk of eviction while they wait for emergency rental assistance.

Brown also said lawmakers may be asked to consider approving additional state aid if more federal money does not come through.

"But it will be impossible to serve every Oregon family that is struggling with rent with state resources alone," Brown said in her statement. "Those conversations will continue, with the goal of bringing forward a proposal

for the Legislature to consider in a special session in the upcoming weeks."

Brown didn't specify when she might call lawmakers back to Salem.

The Legislature met for a special session on legislative and congressional redistricting Sept. 20-27. The 35-day session in 2022 is scheduled to start Feb. 1; lawmakers will conduct committee meetings Jan. 11-13.

Brown issued her statement after the Oregon Department of Housing and Community Services announced that pending applications are likely to claim the rest of Oregon's federal money for emergency rental assistance — and that new applications would be put on hold for at least six

weeks, starting just before midnight Dec. 1.

Department Director Margaret Salazar said her agency was on the verge of committing all of the \$289 million it has received from the U.S. Treasury, on top of the \$200 million that the Legislature approved in state funds back on Dec. 21. All of the state money was spent by the end of June.

"We want to make sure we are keeping our commitments to every Oregon renter who has applied for assistance to date," Salazar told reporters during a conference call. "We do not yet know whether we will receive additional dollars from the Treasury."

Oregon was among the states that committed at

least 65% of their first-round allocations of federal rental assistance by the initial deadline of Sept. 30. The Treasury will reallocate unused money, which Salazar said the agency should know in the next few weeks.

Brown said she has asked Deputy Secretary Wally Adeyemo, the No. 2 official at the Treasury, for direct help. "It is not likely, however, that the U.S. Treasury will be able to deploy additional resources for rental assistance immediately," she said.

Portland and Multnomah, Washington and Clackamas counties also received money from the Treasury for their own emergency rental assistance payments.

As of Nov. 10, according to the agency's dashboard,

it has paid or obligated rental assistance for 23,409 households. The agency has received more than 48,000 applications, 20,000 of which are still under review; both figures exclude 12,000 applications deemed incomplete because tenants or landlords have not supplied adequate information.

An estimated 13,000 households have exceeded the grace periods from evictions allowed for tenants who show proof they have applied for rental assistance. State law passed during the last days of the 2021 session set a deadline of 60 days; actions by commissioners in Multnomah and Washington counties, plus Beaverton, set 90 days. (The Washington County action applies only to

areas outside cities, although Beaverton acted on its own.)

"There must be an immediate action to ensure no one who has applied for help gets evicted while their applications are being processed," Sybil Hebb, an attorney for the Oregon Law Center, said in a statement released by Stable Homes for Oregon Families.

"Additionally, rent assistance must remain available without disruption for new applications. This winter too many Oregon renters are living in uncertainty and fear of losing their homes. By coming together in swift action, state lawmakers can keep people safe and stable in their homes, keep children in school, and stop unnecessary evictions."



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