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Regional Administrator Region 9
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

Arizona, California,
Hawaii, Nevada,
Guam, American Samoa,
Northern Marianas Islands



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Contact: Lisa Fasano, 415-947-4307 (office); 415-760-5421 (cell)

Mark Merchant, 415-947-4297 (office); 415-760-5419 (cell)

West Coast Collaborative reduces emissions from cruise ships in the Bay Area

SAN FRANCISCO – During a ceremony today at San Francisco’s Pier 32, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency presented the Port of San Francisco with a \$100,000 grant to cut diesel emissions from cruise ships that dock at the port.

The funding is part of more than \$1.4 million in new grants and more than \$5.8 million in matching funds for the West Coast Collaborative, which is part of the National Clean Diesel Campaign. The West Coast Collaborative is a partnership between leaders of federal, state, and local government; the private sector; and environmental groups in California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Arizona, Alaska, Canada and Mexico committed to reducing diesel emissions along the West Coast.

With the cruise ship *Regal Princess* and the San Francisco Bay Bridge in the background, Wayne Nastri, administrator of the U.S. EPA’s Pacific Southwest Region, presented the grant to Michael Hardeman, San Francisco Port Commission vice president, to fund the Cruise Liner Emissions Reduction Incentives Project.

In-kind services and fees totaling \$141,000 are being provided by collaborative partners including cruise line companies, the Port of San Francisco, San Francisco Cruise Terminal, LLC and the Bluewater Network.

“This Cruise Liner Emissions Reduction Incentives Project will enable the Port of San Francisco to provide monetary incentives for cruise ships to burn cleaner, lower-sulfur fuels while docked in San Francisco,” Nastri explained. “As one of 16 projects that the West Coast Collaborative is funding this year, this project will result in real, measurable air quality benefits for the Bay Area.”

Each day in the San Francisco Bay Area, oceangoing vessels emit approximately 7.6 tons of sulfur dioxide and 1.2 tons of particulate matter into the air. The project will reduce sulfur dioxide emissions from the port by an estimated 35 tons a year, as well reduce particulate matter emissions by more than a half ton a year in the Bay Area. In addition, the project will help stimulate the market for lower sulfur fuels in San Francisco.

“San Francisco is proud to be one of the first cities in the country to participate in an important incentive for cruise ships to burn cleaner, lower-sulfur fuels while in our port. We applaud the West Coast Collaborative for establishing this more environmentally friendly program,” said San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom.

Sulfur dioxide is a major by-product of ship engine emissions and is known to contribute to acid rain, causing natural habitat destruction and polluted runoff water and reduces visibility. A number of epidemiological studies have shown the association between sulfur dioxide and rates of death and illness. In addition, sulfur dioxide increases the number of asthma attacks.

Particulate matter is microscopic soot emitted by diesel engines. Recent long-term studies of children’s health conducted in California have demonstrated that particle pollution may significantly reduce lung function growth in children. Particulate exposure has been shown to increase the risk of premature death, increase the number of hospital admissions for heart and lung disease and cause asthma.

The California Air Resources Board has declared diesel particulate matter to be a toxic air contaminant and considers it to be one of the most significant components of cancer risk in the state. Premature deaths linked to particulate matter are now at levels comparable to deaths from traffic accidents and second-hand smoke in California.

“The past 35 years has seen a remarkable improvement in the quality of the air breathed by the residents of the San Francisco Bay Area, while both the population and economic vitality of the region has grown tremendously,” said Jack Broadbent, the executive officer of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District. “Exposure to diesel engine emissions remains a critical problem. We applaud this initial effort by the Port of San Francisco and the EPA to control diesel emissions from large cruise ships. We look forward to working jointly to expand this effort beyond 2006 to incorporate the use of shore based electrical power by the cruise ships.”

“Princess Cruises is pleased to participate with the city, the port, the U.S. EPA and the state of California in this collaborative approach to reduce the impact of marine emissions in San Francisco,” said Dean Brown, executive vice president of fleet operations at Princess Cruises.

“People will breathe cleaner air when cruise ships are in port whenever the cleaner fuels are burned,” said Teri Shore, Clean Vessels Campaign Director for Bluewater Network. “This project will show that ship smokestack pollution can be cut quickly and cost-effectively without delay.”

For more information about the West Coast Collaborative, please contact Michelle Roos (roos.michelle@epa.gov, 415-947-4187), or visit our website at: www.westcoastcollaborative.org

Additional event contacts:

- Darlene C. Chiu, Chief Deputy Communications Director, Mayor's Office of Communications, 415-554-6131;

- Renee Dunn, Port of San Francisco, 415-274-0488;
- Teresa Lee, Bay Area Air Quality Management District director of public information and outreach, 415-749-5000;
- Tom Dow, Carnival Cruises, 202-374-7150;
- Teri Shore, Bluewater Network, 415-544-0790, ext. 20, (office), 707-280-1935 (cell).