

# The Salt Lake Tribune

## Commentary: Construction vehicles must be the next target in clear air fight



(Rick Egan | The Salt Lake Tribune) The intersection of I-215 and Redwood road is one of the projects that UDOT has identified as one of the 10 big construction projects for 2018. Monday, April 2, 2018.

By Terry Marasco | For The Tribune • Published: 4 days ago  
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The public receives messaging implying that about half of the pollution in the Salt Lake Valley comes mainly from automobiles. We are asked to drive less, buy electric vehicles, take public transportation and ride bikes because cars — your car — is the major culprit.

In fact, the inventory of mobile source pollution (nitrous oxide, PM<sub>2.5</sub> and volatile organic compounds) compiled by the Utah Division of Air Quality states clearly that, of all mobile sources, only 18 percent comes from passenger cars. The Envision Utah pie chart suggests that autos and light trucks are most of the problem. A closer look tells a different story.

Pollution comes from tail pipe exhaust of vehicles and equipment powered by internal combustion engines using gasoline or diesel fuel.

The two categories of mobile sources are on-road and non-road. Of the eight categories of sources, non-road engines and vehicles, on-road light commercial, pickups and heavy-duty trucks contribute 74 percent of emissions, Cars contribute only 18 percent.

Bottom line? There are other mobile sources contributing far greater emissions than cars. In a 2016 Utah Priorities report from the Utah Foundation, Bryce Bird, director of DAQ, noted that there are few easy policy solutions left regarding air quality. "Remaining fruit are higher in the tree," he said.

No, the fruits are on the roads and at construction sites.

Heavy duty trucks, many of which use diesel fuel, contribute 26 percent of total mobile sources, cars 18 percent. Just as the state has imposed road use fees on electric vehicles (Senate Bill 136), in the next legislative session it is reasonable to require an air quality fee on heavy trucks coming into Utah and operating internally. Let's not point at car drivers over the higher polluters.

Non-road sources such as commercial, construction and industrial vehicles contribute 19 percent of emissions, cars 18 percent. These include heavy construction equipment such as bulldozers and cranes. Many of these are highly polluting diesel engines. They can be encouraged to convert their engines with incentives and regulations from the Legislature.

For example, from the London Low Emissions Construction Partnership:

"Retrofitting of older equipment with pollution controls such as diesel oxidation catalysts (DOC's) or diesel particulate filter directly onto the engines exhaust system, will reduce emissions from construction equipment. DOC's are like a catalytic convertor as used in on-road vehicles and can lead to a reduction on PM emissions of between 20 - 40 percent."

Utah's reputation as a low-regulation, low-wage, low-tax state attracts business. It

is no surprise that imposing requirements on business is anathema to the state's business-first philosophy. Therefore, it is no surprise that the narrative points to cars for most pollution. This business drive is at the expense of the citizenry's health.

This last legislative session could have done more for solutions necessary to reduce emissions. For example, Rep. Steve Handy admirably introduced a pilot project (HB 211) that would have reduced railroad switch diesel engine emissions in westside communities, which are the most polluted in the valley. It failed even though the legislature was informed that the diesel switch engines contribute as much as the interstates nearby.

The significance of these truck and equipment numbers, particularly for the west side, needs to be considered as the Inland Port concept develops. Some pro-port legislators claim that new Tier 3 gasoline standards will counterbalance the pollution that the port concept will contribute. What such claims ignore, by spin or ignorance, is that cars and gasoline-powered trucks are a small percentage of emissions.

One port-supporting legislator glibly stated that the heavy trucks will be loaded from trains at the port and "drive off out of state." Increased diesel locomotive rail traffic and hundreds more diesel trucks every day on I-15, I-215, and I-80 is serious.

The west side is surrounded by rail lines and its switch engines, the Kennecott Mine smelter, power plant and tailings; I-80, I-215, and I-15; and, the airport (which is expanding). Utah Health Department data states that west side communities (Glendale, Magna, and Rose Park) have the highest rates of illnesses in the Valley. It is unacceptable for the west side to continue to bear the pollution burden for the rest of the Salt Lake Valley.

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It is fair to ask all stakeholders, mainly the trucking and construction industry, to contribute toward reducing emissions as cars are nowhere near the largest polluters. And, the development of the Inland Port needs a master air quality plan that results in net zero emissions in the near- and long-terms.

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