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For advice

A Proposal to Retrofit Pre-Euro Heavy Diesel Vehicles with Emission Reduction Devices

PURPOSE

This paper seeks Members' views on mandating the installation of emission reduction devices in pre-Euro heavy diesel vehicles to reduce their particulate emissions.

BACKGROUND

2. Pre-Euro diesel vehicles emit up to seven times more particulates than vehicles meeting the prevailing Euro III standards. Since 1 April 1995, no new pre-Euro diesel vehicles have been registered. Nevertheless, retrofitting the existing fleet of pre-Euro diesel vehicles with emission reduction devices is necessary to reduce their particulate emissions and will help improve air quality at the street level.

3. In October 2001, we completed a voluntary programme to assist owners of pre-Euro light diesel vehicles (i.e. those weighing 4 tonnes or below) to install particulate removal devices in their vehicles. Since 1 December 2003, the installation has been made mandatory. In 2004, we also completed a similar voluntary programme in respect of pre-Euro heavy diesel vehicles weighing more than 4 tonnes, except those requiring the operation of on-board equipment when idling (i.e. long idling vehicles). About 97% of such vehicles participated in the installation programme.

THE PROPOSAL

4. In line with the policy applicable to light diesel vehicles, we propose to make the installation requirement mandatory for pre-Euro heavy diesel vehicles by amending the Air Pollution Control (Emission Reduction Devices for Vehicles) Regulation (Cap. 311, Sub. Leg. U) (the "Regulation"). At present, the Regulation requires all pre-Euro light diesel vehicles to be installed with approved emission reduction devices. We

propose to extend such installation requirement to pre-Euro heavy diesel vehicles except those long idling vehicles, with effect from 1 April 2006. Owners failing to comply with the requirement will be liable to cancellation or non-renewal of their vehicle licences.

5. As regards those pre-Euro long idling diesel vehicles, we have already started a retrofitting programme to assist their owners in installing particulate removal devices in their vehicles. The programme will be completed within 2005. We will consult Members on further extending the mandatory installation to this class of vehicles in due course.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

6. We had informed the affected vehicle owners of our plan to make the installation of particulate removal devices mandatory for pre-Euro heavy diesel vehicles before we started the installation programme in 2004. Of about 30,000 affected vehicles, only about 930 vehicles did not participate in the installation programme. The proposed commencement date of 1 April 2006 will allow them enough time to retrofit particulate removal devices to meet the new mandatory requirement.

7. We have also consulted the relevant transport trades, and no objection has been received. Prior to the introduction of the installation programme, the emission control technology had been thoroughly tested in conjunction with the trades and it was found that such devices would not cause problems.

FINANCIAL AND CIVIL SERVICE IMPLICATIONS

8. The proposal will be implemented by existing staff. There will be no additional financial implications.

ADVICE SOUGHT

9. Members are requested to advise on the proposal set out in paragraph 4. Subject to Members' views, we will prepare the necessary legislative amendments to the Regulation as soon as possible.

Environmental Protection Department
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