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Governor Wolf Announces \$118 Million Volkswagen Settlement to Fund New Air Pollution Reduction Program

Administration will use \$118 million Volkswagen Settlement to fund new and expanded grant and rebate programs aimed at reducing air pollution from diesel emissions

Harrisburg, PA – Governor Tom Wolf today announced the roll out of new grant and rebate programs to improve air quality in Pennsylvania funded by the \$118 million settlement with Volkswagen Group of America, Pennsylvania’s share of the settlement for allegations of cheating on U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) emissions tests.

The new initiative, Driving PA Forward, is aimed at permanently reducing nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions statewide by as much as 27,700 tons overall by accelerating the replacement of older, polluting diesel engines with cleaner technologies.

“Clean air is the cornerstone of a clean, healthy environment,” said Governor Wolf. “When Volkswagen cheated on its emissions equipment, it undermined that cornerstone. Today, through our new Driving PA Forward initiative, we will begin to remedy that by driving the transition towards advanced zero-emission and low-emission vehicles and accelerating the build-out of infrastructure necessary to support the next generation of transportation options.”

“We encourage businesses to switch to cleaner alternatives and be the driving force behind cleaner air in the commonwealth,” said Department of Environmental Protection Secretary Patrick McDonnell. “Driving PA Forward will provide grants and rebates to upgrade and replace vehicles with cleaner alternatives, particularly in areas of the commonwealth with the poorest air quality. This isn’t just school buses and tractor-trailers; projects to replace or upgrade tugboats, forklifts, delivery trucks, and many more vehicles and equipment will be eligible for funding.”

Emissions from diesel engines in trucks, buses, forklifts, and other transportation equipment account for over 25 percent of the NOx emissions in Pennsylvania. These emissions contribute to ground-level ozone, leading to poorer air quality and health impacts, especially for children and the elderly.”

Diesel emissions also include fine particulate matter (PM 2.5), which can lead to health problems such as asthma and worsen medical issues such as heart and lung disease and emphysema.

“Reducing smog and particle pollution is essential to maintaining healthy communities,” said Department of Health Secretary Rachel Levine. “More than 380,000 children in Pennsylvania have asthma – something that is exacerbated by air pollution from diesel emissions. These grants and rebates will cut down on those emissions and help everyone breathe a little easier.”

Eight grant and rebate programs will be available over the next five years, with as much as \$39 million available for disbursement in year one. Programs will be rolled out throughout 2018.

The Driving PA Forward grant and rebate programs include:

- **Clean Diesel Grants:** Competitive grants for diesel emission reduction projects, including but not limited to exhaust controls, engine upgrades, and engine and vehicle replacement. Eligible vehicles, engines, and equipment under this program include many of those eligible under other programs listed here, but also include those used in construction, agriculture, mining and other industries. Applications for these grants will be available this month.
- **Electric Vehicle Fast Charging or Hydrogen Fuel Cell Equipment Grants:** Competitive grants for the acquisition, installation, operation, and maintenance of electric vehicle (EV) fast charging equipment and hydrogen fuel cell vehicle supply equipment. Grant applications will be accepted beginning later this summer.
- **Level 2 Light-Duty Vehicle Charging Equipment Rebates:** Rebates for Level 2 Electric Vehicle Charging equipment for both public and non-public use to charge electric vehicles. Rebates will be available beginning later this summer.
- **Heavy-Duty Truck and Transit Bus Grants:** Competitive grants for Class 8 trucks and transit buses. Model year 1992-2009 or older vehicles will be eligible for replacement or repowering with new diesel, electric, or alternative fuel engines. Grant applications will be accepted starting later this summer.
- **Medium-Duty Truck, School and Shuttle Bus, Port Drayage Truck Rebates:** Rebates for class 4-7 trucks and port drayage trucks model year 1992-2009 and for school and shuttle buses older than model year 2009. Rebates will be available beginning later this summer.
- **Shore Power Systems for Ocean-Going Vessel Grants:** Competitive grants for upgrades to ports to enable compatible ocean-going vessels to plug in and rely on electric power while in port, rather than running diesel engines. Grant applications will be accepted beginning later this year.
- **Forklift, Airport Ground Support Equipment, and Port Cargo Handling Equipment Grants:** Competitive grants to repower or replace vehicles used in transit and transportation to fully electric models to reduce air pollution at ports, airports, and factories. Grant applications will be accepted beginning later this year.
- **Ferry, Tugboat, and Freight Switcher Grants:** Competitive grants to repower or replace eligible ferries, tugboats, and freight switcher locomotives. Grant applications will be accepted beginning later this year.

More information on the grant and rebate programs, including program guidelines and application instructions for open grant and rebate programs, can be found at www.dep.pa.gov/drivePAforward.

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