Heavy-Duty and Medium-Duty Truck Pollution

New Mexico’s transportation sector is the second-largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, after oil and gas production, and one of the state’s largest sources of particulate matter pollutant emissions, largely due to heavy-duty and medium-duty trucks.

- Heavy- and medium-duty trucks made up 18 percent of total vehicle miles traveled in New Mexico in 2017—double the national average—and emitted an overwhelming 75 percent of all nitrogen oxides (NOx) and fine particulate matter (PM$_{2.5}$) from on-road vehicles. These pollutants, along with volatile organic compounds and other health-damaging air pollutants emitted by trucks, can increase the risk of cardiovascular and respiratory disease.

- Truck pollution is most dense in urban areas of New Mexico, particularly along urban interstate corridors. Certain racial groups, including Black, Asian American, and Hispanic/Latin populations, are underrepresented in the 20 percent of census tracts with the lowest level of truck pollution, and overrepresented in the 20 percent of census tracts with the highest level of truck pollution, relative to their statewide population fraction.

- The health risks of trucking are not limited to air pollution. In recent years, the Permian Basin oil and gas boom has brought an influx of heavy-duty trucks and tankers to Southeastern New Mexico, likely contributing to a doubling of roadway fatalities in Eddy and Lea counties from 2016-2018.

Prioritizing heavy-duty and medium-duty truck electrification, combined with measures such as limits on truck idling, retirement of heavily-polluting older trucks, and multi-state agreements to reduce interstate trucking pollution, can simultaneously help reduce greenhouse gas and air pollutant emissions across the state.

For more information, visit:
www.psehealthyenergy.org/our-work/western-states-deep-decarbonization/