Press Release

Faster action on black carbon emissions is needed: report

Standards across world need to change faster to meet emissions and temperature goals

Paris, July 24, 2018: Faster action on black carbon emissions than initially thought is needed for emissions reduction and temperature targets to be met, according to the International Council on Clean Transportation (ICCT) and the Climate and Clean Air Coalition (the Coalition).

A report by the ICCT, sponsored by the Coalition, takes stock of the world's progress towards the Coalition's global efforts to introduce low-sulfur fuels and cleaner diesel vehicles, which is a crucial component of a larger strategy to reduce near-term climate warming by an average of 0.5°C over 25 years, while cutting the public health cost of air pollution.

This larger strategy requires black carbon, or soot, from all sectors to fall to 75 per cent below 2010 levels by 2030.

And, since diesel vehicles are a major source of black carbon emissions globally — accounting for an estimated 88 per cent of these emissions from road transport — dramatic reductions in this sector would benefit public health, agriculture and climate change.

In November 2016, members of the Coalition adopted the Marrakech Communique, which supports the implementation of the Global Strategy on Low-Sulfur Fuels and Cleaner Diesel Vehicles and commits specific members to adopting world-class emission standards.

The strategy sets targets for meeting vehicle emissions and fuel quality standards equivalent to Euro 4/IV by 2025 and Euro 6/VI by 2030.

But the report, *Global progress toward soot-free diesel vehicles in 2018*, found that higher ambition was needed from this sector to remain on target for a 75 per cent reduction in black carbon emissions by 2030 necessary, which would contribute to delivering a 0.5 degree reduction in near-term average warming — ambition that would be equal to Euro 4/IV implementation by 2021 and Euro 6/VI no later than 2025.

"This report shows that national fuel quality and emission control standards equivalent to Euro VI can deliver significant near-term climate benefits," said Lead, Program on Clean Air at the ICCT, Ray Minjares.

"The heavy-duty vehicles initiative is working hard to ensure all countries succeed in taking this policy step," he said.

The good news is that clear and cost-effective technologies exist to achieve substantial emissions reductions from diesel vehicles, which make them a good candidate to move the needle towards in favour of both climate and sustainable development goals.

“Soot-free” engines — or those equivalent to or better than Euro VI for heavy-duty diesel vehicles, Euro 5b for light-duty diesel vehicles, or any policies that explicitly require the installation of a diesel particulate filter — are capable of reducing exhaust emissions of diesel BC by 99 per cent compared with older-technology engines.

More modern vehicles, “filter-forcing” standards and cleaner, more efficient technologies and fuel economy standards all combine to improve fuel efficiency as well, which tends to reduce the carbon dioxide emissions from these vehicles.

The study found that in 2018, 40 per cent of new heavy-duty diesel vehicles sold worldwide were equipped with diesel particulate filters.

This share was projected to grow to 50 per cent in 2021 after adopted Euro VI-equivalent standards have gone into force in India and Mexico.

But earlier this month, China singlehandedly steepened that trajectory: its new standard, requiring all new trucks, buses and other heavy-duty vehicles powered by diesel would have to meet Euro VI equivalent emissions standards from 2021, ensures that two-thirds of the world’s new heavy-duty diesel vehicles will be soot-free in three years’ time.

Earlier this year, Mexico, a Coalition member, became the first Latin American country to adopt national Euro VI standards for heavy-duty vehicles, and India is moving towards nationwide Euro VI standards by 2020.

Transport emissions were a hot topic at last week’s Asia-Pacific Climate Week and the World Cities Summit in Singapore, which took place just days after the release of the joint report, with participants emphasizing the multiple benefits of tackling them.

“We need to strengthen the environmental-health link to help push the global shift to clean mobility,” said UN Environment’s Director, Asia and the Pacific Office, Dechen Tsering, at a session on low-carbon urban mobility.

“We need measures to reduce black carbon and particulate matter, we now need to look at different areas and how to implement them. Getting them into Nationally-Determined Contributions is important, but we also need champions and frontrunners who will make it happen,” she said.

The report recommended harmonization of policy across trading blocs: “alignment of vehicle emissions standards, fuel quality standards, and used vehicle import policies among countries with strong economic ties could have the added benefit of eliminating or reducing barriers to progress such as competitiveness concerns, cross-border traffic, limited access to cleaner fuels, and limited availability of vehicle models meeting local design specifications”.

Read the report here: Global progress toward soot-free diesel vehicles in 2018

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