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SEPTA Receives $1.2 Million EPA Grant to Improve Air Quality

Funds Will Go Toward Locomotive Clean-Diesel Conversion Project

PHILADELPHIA (Dec. 8, 2011) – A $1.2 million grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will help SEPTA improve air quality in and around its rail yards, through the conversion of a locomotive to a clean diesel engine.

EPA Regional Administrator Shawn M. Garvin announced the funding, made possible through EPA’s Diesel Emissions Reduction Act Program, during a press conference today with SEPTA General Manager Joseph M. Casey.

The EPA-funded project will help SEPTA repower the engine of a conventional diesel maintenance locomotive with two generator sets (“GenSet”), and a diesel particulate filter. The repower will drastically cut harmful diesel emissions.

“I commend SEPTA for voluntarily taking actions that will improve the environment and people’s health,” said Garvin. “This GenSet engine project is enabling SEPTA to help clean our air while also generating fuel savings for the Authority. It underscores what EPA has been saying all along – that environmental improvements create economic benefits as well.”

With funding secured, SEPTA can move forward on the project to install this state-of-the-art technology on a 1950s-era locomotive. The repower is expected to be complete by mid-2012. The locomotive is one of six in SEPTA’s fleet, and will be just the second to utilize GenSets. SEPTA’s locomotives are used for maintenance, repairs and to rescue stranded trains.

“This initiative marks another important step forward in SEPTA’s overall Sustainability Program,” Casey said. “Through projects like this, SEPTA is becoming a better neighbor to the communities it serves and contributing to improved air quality.”

GenSet locomotives reduce nitrous oxide and particulate matter emissions by approximately 80 percent and can reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 25 percent through technologies that monitor engine idling and switch to “sleep” mode after a period of inactivity.

SEPTA continues to make environmental upgrades in many of its operations. As recently as last year, SEPTA worked with EPA’s Energy Star program to improve energy efficiency at the Authority’s headquarters at 1234 Market Street in Philadelphia. Work paid off when SEPTA earned EPA’s prestigious Energy Star Building label for its headquarters building. The Energy Star labels are awarded only to buildings that reach 85 percent or greater energy efficiency. SEPTA is also continuing efforts to replace traditional diesel buses with energy efficient diesel-electric hybrid buses. Over the last several years, SEPTA has added 472 hybrids to its fleet – meaning approximately one-third of all buses in service are cleaner-burning hybrids.

For more information about SEPTA, visit www.septa.org.

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