

## Daily Breeze

### Zero-emissions locomotive test project at Port of LA advances



*Otis L. Cliatt, president Pacific Harbor Line, Inc. speaks at a celebration of the zero-emission locomotive, behind him. The event also celebrated the newest class of Southern California Locomotive Engineers in Wilmington on Thursday, May 4, 2023. The Locomotive is billed as “the world’s most advanced zero-emission, low-noise The event backdrop was the world’s most advanced zero-emission, low-noise locomotive that will join PHL’s operating fleet at the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach. (Photo by Brittany Murray, Press-Telegram/SCNG)*

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With no discussion the members of the Los Angeles City Trade, Travel and Tourism Committee on Tuesday, Oct. 15, advanced an agreement for a zero-emissions switcher locomotive demonstration project at the Port of Los Angeles.

The item, a first amendment to an agreement with Union Pacific Railroad Company to design and manufacture the locomotive, stems from a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency that went before the Board of Los Angeles Harbor Commissioners in 2021 and 2022 when it was originally approved. The commission approved an amendment on July 30, 2024, which is the item now heading to the Los Angeles City Council.

The harbor department is administering the grant for UP to purchase and demonstrate a new zero-emissions switch locomotive that includes battery capacity, according to the July 2024 board report.

“A switcher locomotive makes short distance movements of rail cars, such as assembling and disassembling trains at various locations in and around the Port of Los Angeles complex, sorting cars of inbound cargo trains for subsequent delivery to terminals, and short-distance hauling of rail cargo within the port,” the report stated.

The battery-electric switcher locomotive, the report stated, is expected to have a run time of up to 24 hours, depending on charging and utilization rates.

The grant award would not provide funding for infrastructure or the cost of charging infrastructure, however, but UP has said it will install charging infrastructure at its primary yard for the switcher locomotive.

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When placed into service, according to the port’s board report, the ZE switch locomotive — utilizing battery electric technology — will operate at rail yards in the South Coast Air Basin, including a demonstration at UP’s Intermodal Container Transfer Facility.

The port submitted an application to the EPA requesting \$2 million to help fund the Zero Emission Switcher Locomotive Project under the EPA Diesel Emissions Reduction Act 2021 grant solicitation. The EPA awarded the Harbor Department the full grant award. Total project cost is \$4.5 million, which includes the EPA grant and UP’s \$2.5 million cost share.

The project is part of an ambitious ramp-up to develop zero-emissions equipment in and around the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach.

In May 2023, weeks after the California Air Resources Board approved an ambitious rule to limit rail pollution, the [Pacific Harbor Line unveiled one of the nation’s most advanced zero-emission locomotives](#) — to be tested over the course of a year on short-haul routes in the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach.