

NEWS



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Solutions to Asia's Growing Air Pollution Problem to Be Posed at Conference of Government Officials, Environmental Scientists and Industry Representatives

BANGKOK, THAILAND, January 29, 2001 — Motorcycles, cars, trucks and buses have become a serious cause of lung disease and breathing disorders in Asian cities. With growing economic prosperity in the region, the number of motor vehicles has risen dramatically – in some cities by 600% – during the past two decades, and is expected to double by the year 2030.

In many Asian cities, including Bangkok, almost half of registered vehicles are two-stroke motorcycles, which are some of the dirtiest engines on the road. It is not unusual to see Bangkok residents on the street covering their noses and mouths with surgical masks to protect themselves from the hazardous fumes.

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While many Asian nations have begun to address this problem, clean air programs are behind those in the United States, Western Europe and Japan. On January 30 - February 1, more than 100 government officials, environmental scientists and industry representatives from 13 countries (Japan, China, Thailand, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Taiwan, Australia, the Philippines, United States, Belgium, Germany and the United Kingdom) will gather in Bangkok to discuss solutions to serious air pollution in Asian cities.

Among the topics to be discussed at the Asian Vehicle Emission Control Conference are:

- Experience from regions with more advanced clean air programs to help programs in Asia “leapfrog” old procedures.
- How low pollution and economic growth can be compatible goals.
- The need to clean up vehicles and fuels simultaneously; specifically, the critical need to remove lead from gasoline. Lead, which is still used in several Asian countries poses a serious direct risk to public health and poisons effective pollution-control technologies.
- Progress made by Asian countries in combating vehicular pollution.
- The latest technologies for emission control of cars, trucks, buses and motorcycles.
- Emission control retrofit and inspection and maintenance programs for air-quality improvement.

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Presentations will be made by officials from the Thailand Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment; Automotive Research Association of India; Shanghai Academy of Environmental Sciences; Taiwan Environmental Protection Agency; the European Commission; the California Air Resources Board; the United States Environmental Protection Agency; car companies; and companies that develop and manufacture equipment to control pollution from motor vehicles.

The Conference, sponsored by the Association for Emissions Control by Catalyst (AECC) and the Manufacturers of Emission Controls Association (MECA), will be held from Tuesday, January 30 to Thursday, February 1 at the Shangri-La Hotel in Bangkok, Thailand. In addition, there will be a news conference on Tuesday, January 30 at 6:00 pm. All journalists who wish to attend any part of the Asian Vehicle Emission Control Conference or the January 30 news conference are asked to contact: Denise Lenci, Calumet Communications Group, in the U.S. at + 914 712.9150 or dlenci@calumetcg.com.

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