

The Congestion tax expects to move trucks and cars from below 86th Street to above 86th Street. This can only worsen the impact in neighborhoods such as East Harlem highlighted in the New York Post story that follows:

http://www.nypost.com/seven/11172007/news/regionalnews/under_asthma_attack_598120.htm

UNDER ASTHMA ATTACK

HARLEM'S 'TOXIC' TRUCKERS TARGETED

By DOUGLAS MONTERO and SAMUEL GOLDSMITH



SMOKE SCREENING: A state Environmental Conservation officer screens a truck for disease-causing pollutants in East Harlem

November 17, 2007 -- Smoke-belching truck tearing through Harlem are being ticketed with heavy fines for leaving a trail of toxic dust that has elevated the area's asthma rates to alarming levels, authorities said yesterday.

Over the past two weeks, 110 trucks have been slapped with fines that start at \$750 for first offenders, and \$1,300 for those caught a second time.

"We call this our stop smoking initiative for trucks," said Pete Grannis, commissioner of the state's Department of Environmental Conservation.

"Just as cigarette smoke creates a risk not only for smokers, but also for those around smokers, polluting trucks put neighborhoods at risk."

Officers from both the DEC and the city's Department of Environmental Protection have used checkpoints to test emissions.

Thousands of trucks pass through the area every day. More than one-third of those inspected were found in violation of state air quality regulations.

The DEC has directly linked dirty trucks with the area's high asthma rate, 4 percent above the national average.

Gregory Finch, 31, lives with his 10-year-old daughter on Third Avenue in East Harlem, and both suffer from the respiratory illness.

He blames the trucks.

"You could sit by my window and a truck will roll by, and all the smoke goes into my house," he said.

The crackdown has focused on ZIP code 10029 - a square mile from 96th Street to 116th Street and from the FDR Drive to Fifth Avenue.

If the truck is found to be above the legal emissions limit, the driver has 30 days to get up to code and reduce the fine to \$150.

Second-offenders cannot get a reduction.

Driver Juan Leonardo, 28, who was ticketed yesterday, fumed, "This is New York. There's always complications. They should be looking at sanitation trucks, they're the worst."

José Mata, 35, who has been driving a truck through East Harlem for eight years, agreed.

"Man, it's getting tough to work in Manhattan," he griped after getting written up. "I'm getting a headache. I may have to find a different route."

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