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PDX Helps Bring International Carbon Accreditation System to North America

Portland International Airport joined four other airport authorities to bring an internationally recognized carbon accreditation system for the aviation industry to North America this month.

The system is endorsed by Airports Council International and officially launched in Europe in 2009 where it has been widely in use since. It provides a common standard for airports across the globe to measure carbon emissions and commit to reduction actions.

With the system now expanding to regions across the globe, PDX committed to be an early adopter of the system along with Aéroports de Montréal, Denver International Airport, San Francisco International Airport and Sea-Tac International Airport.

The Port of Portland already brings a wealth of experience in carbon accounting to this new process. As part of its commitment to promote clean air and reduce impacts to global climate change, the Port signed on as a founding reporter of The Climate Registry (TCR) in 2008. The Port has reported greenhouse gas emissions organization-wide in each subsequent year.

In 2009, the Port's nine-member Commission set a goal for the Port to reduce direct and indirect greenhouse gas emissions Port-wide by 15 percent below 1990 levels by 2020. The target surpasses the state-wide target for reducing Oregon's greenhouse gas emissions of 10 percent below 1990 levels.

Reporting to TCR has helped the Port identify its largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions and several actions to address them. The combined actions have yielded a 65 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions below the baseline year of 1990 for Port owned and controlled sources.

Substantial savings have come through the Port's purchase of renewable energy certificates (RECs) for 100 percent of its electricity consumption. The RECs account for power use at major facilities such as the PDX terminal building, which serves about 45,000 travelers on an average day.

Simultaneously, the Port is systematically investing in energy efficiency and conservation projects. Since 2010, lighting upgrades and retrofits to heating, cooling and ventilation systems at Port facilities resulted in a combined savings of 13,325 metric tons of carbon and 15.7 million kilowatt hours annually. The Port's fleet of shuttle buses, which deliver passengers and employees between the terminal and parking areas around the clock, run entirely on cleaner-burning compressed natural gas.

Representatives from PDX participated in a signing ceremony at ACI-North America's annual conference in Atlanta last week. In the coming months, PDX will work towards achieving certification under the Airport Carbon Accreditation program, joining 108 airports on five continents.

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