# National City electric truck charging station project sparks local debate



A new industrial development planned for National City, California, has sparked significant local attention and highlighted ongoing tensions between the city and the Port of San Diego. The project in question is a 4.8-acre electric truck charging station proposed on port property near the National City Marine Terminal on Tidelands Avenue. The developer, Skycharger, a national electric vehicle infrastructure company, has scheduled a community meeting to present the project details, answer questions, and seek public support.

John Friedrich, Skycharger’s chief development officer, emphasised the benefits of the project in an interview with Voice of San Diego. “In my view, [the charging facility] brings environmental and economic benefits to the community,” he said. “We want to have it be rooted in a local community benefit mindset.” Friedrich described the facility as similar to a highway truck stop, featuring 70 charging ports for trucks of various sizes, alongside a convenience store with restrooms for truck drivers. A key component of the site would be a solar panel array with an onsite 1.25-megawatt storage battery, supplying renewable energy to the charging ports and supporting the port’s broader Maritime Clean Air Strategy aimed at reducing pollution and transitioning to alternative energy.

The port’s strategy remains active despite the recent withdrawal of a statewide effort to phase out diesel trucks in California. Friedrich noted, “The project will reduce air pollution in National City,” with a long-term goal of converting most trucks serving the port to electric power.

However, local reaction remains divided, with concerns voiced by city officials, including National City Mayor Ron Morrison. He expressed worries about increased truck traffic in an already congested area and potential risks associated with electric battery fires. Morrison referenced recent incidents, such as a large electric truck fire at the Port of Los Angeles last year that burned for 24 hours and emitted toxic fumes. In response, Friedrich assured the community that the facility would have 24-hour security and monitoring linked to city emergency services to address any emergencies swiftly.

The community meeting to discuss the project is scheduled for 6 p.m. on Thursday, 1 May, at the National City Aquatic Center, located at 3300 Pepper Park Place.

The introduction of this project comes against a backdrop of broader regional concerns discussed at the South County Economic Development Council Economic Summit held recently at the Liberty Station Conference Center in San Diego. The mayors of National City, Imperial Beach, Coronado, and Chula Vista shared their perspectives on the economic challenges facing South San Diego County, using the term “headwinds” to describe the difficulties posed by limited local control, tariffs, environmental issues, and regulatory constraints. National City Mayor Ron Morrison acknowledged the limited influence local governments have over broader economic forces, stating, “We’re at the bottom of the food chain.”

Regional issues such as the sewage crisis in the Tijuana River and state-level housing regulations were highlighted as impacting economic growth and quality of life. Despite political contests among local leaders, collaborative efforts to tackle these challenges remain ongoing.

In related local news, progress has been made toward completing a long-awaited trail around Sweetwater Reservoir. On 23 April, the Sweetwater Authority’s governing board approved cooperating with county officials to design, build, and maintain the continuous loop trail. This development brings closer the goal of connecting existing trails around the reservoir, enhancing recreational opportunities for hikers and outdoor enthusiasts in South County.

Additionally, Assemblymember David Alvarez continues his legislative efforts targeting California’s environmental policies, aiming to balance clean air initiatives with economic considerations for residents. Alvarez, who has co-sponsored legislation to ease housing development restrictions, will co-chair a committee focused on reviewing clean air policies, including the impacts on fuel costs and incentives.

The Voice of San Diego is reporting on these developments, offering detailed coverage of the intersection between environmental, economic, and community issues in the region.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.portofsandiego.org/press-releases/general-press-releases/port-san-diego-begin-environmental-review-zero-emissions> - The Port of San Diego announced on September 12, 2024, that it is considering a proposal for a zero-emission truck stop in West National City, aligning with the Port's Maritime Clean Air Strategy and its 'Health Equity for All' vision.
* <https://www.thelog.com/news-departments/part-1-port-san-diego-initiates-environmental-review-for-zero-emissions-truck-stop-proposal-to-further-launch-environmental-efforts/> - The Port of San Diego initiated an environmental review for a zero-emission truck stop proposal in National City, supporting the Port's goal of achieving 40% zero-emission heavy-duty truck trips by June 30, 2026, and 100% by December 31, 2030.
* <https://skycharger.com/zev-truck-hub/> - Skycharger proposes to build a 4.8-acre zero-emission truck stop with 70 charging ports, a convenience store, and restrooms, featuring a 1,750-kW solar array and a battery system to ensure energy reliability and operational resiliency.
* <https://ceqanet.opr.ca.gov/2024081332> - The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Notice of Exemption for the Port of San Diego's zero-emission truck stop project, detailing the project's location at Tidelands Avenue and West 19th Street in National City, CA 91950.
* <https://evstationslocal.com/states/california/national-city/> - A list of electric vehicle charging stations in National City, CA, including locations at 3299 Tidelands Avenue, National City, CA 91950, operating 24 hours daily.
* <https://hoodline.com/2024/09/san-diego-advances-zero-emission-vision-port-embarks-on-review-for-eco-friendly-truck-stop/> - An article reporting on the Port of San Diego's environmental review for a zero-emission truck stop, highlighting the project's features and its alignment with the Port's clean air goals.
* <https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMijAFBVV95cUxPTEx4UUxIOXlXTm9GeUw2RXgtRm1WRVNlQklRTVEzSHpuZmE3Q3NWaEpmRjBiUnBRSnRyVTJPZW1xMGgxalhHRl8teVFuRnl1bXRaNjQ4SEk4ektPcTZERHlYOUdrMWQtUlV1NTVWcVNaN2NUMk1SSFQ4ZndmWHJDYkpuRXAzMl9WWEU3bg?oc=5&hl=en-US&gl=US&ceid=US:en> - Please view link - unable to able to access data