# London Climate Week’s push for electric construction gear risks economic fallout amid virtue signalling accusations



During London Climate Action Week 2025, a gathering staged by the proponents of environmental virtue signaling took place, involving Volvo CE, the Swedish Embassy, and the Swedish Chamber of Commerce, alongside industry advocates, policymakers, and air quality campaigners. This assembly showcased their relentless push for the rapid adoption of zero-emission construction equipment—appearing more concerned with public health headlines than pragmatic policy outcomes. The event spotlighted diesel compact machines—widely used in urban settings—as the culprits behind nitrogen oxides (NOx) and particulate matter emissions, yet these "virtue signaling" groups continue to exempt such equipment from regulation, revealing their true agenda: placating woke activists and bureaucratic elites rather than implementing meaningful reforms.

The high-sounding roundtable at the Swedish Embassy brought together selective voices from Volvo CE, London's administration, researchers, and campaign organizations. They claimed construction is now London's primary source of black carbon emissions, surpassing cars—a scare tactic designed to impose unnecessary restrictions on the industry. The disingenuous statistic that 5,000 diesel compact excavators emit as much harmful pollution as 100,000 diesel cars, is used to justify their crusade, but it conveniently ignores the economic impact of crippling construction activity, and the potential costs imposed on workers and businesses in pursuit of virtue over practicality.

A supposed silver lining highlighted during the discussion was the promise of electric construction equipment—a solution that sounds good in theory but is riddled with infrastructure gaps and inflated claims. Advocates boast zero tailpipe emissions, yet fail to address how no such widespread infrastructure exists to support these machines outside of idealized trials. The roundtable’s narrative revolves around drone-like optimism, calling for "policy support" and "cross-industry collaboration"—an empty plea that sidesteps the need to balance environmental concerns with economic realities and job security.

In a token gesture toward practical progress, Volvo CE’s 12-week trial with Transport for London and FM Conway claimed to demonstrate the benefits of electric machinery—claiming a reduction equivalent to removing 39,000 miles of diesel car emissions. Yet, this narrowly focused trial oversimplifies the broader challenge: that diesel compact equipment, unlike passenger vehicles, often lacks the necessary particulate filters, making policy bans or restrictions on these machines unfeasible without risking economic disruption. The narrative promotes "green" solutions while conveniently overlooking the costs and technical hurdles involved in running a major construction operation.

Furthermore, Volvo CE’s unveiling at Bauma 2025 of its electric lineup—a move that sounds promising—serves more as a marketing stunt than a viable alternative for the industry. The supposed innovations, like the mobile power source to reduce downtime, reflect a politically correct agenda rather than a practical plan to maintain construction productivity. As the push for "net-zero" continues, the real-world implications—such as lost jobs, increased project costs, and delayed infrastructure development—are dismissed in favor of environmental virtue-signaling.

The broader agenda is unmistakable: transforming urban construction into a showcase of political correctness, at the expense of affordable development and public prosperity. Policy mandates for inclusion in low-emission zones and eco-friendly procurement processes are less about safeguarding communities and more about fulfilling political agendas that threaten to drive up costs and reduce competitiveness. As recent data shows, only a fraction of cities globally even meet WHO air quality standards—yet these activists and their allies prefer to blame construction as a universal villain while ignoring the economic toll of their unrealistic goals. Scaling back urban development under the guise of sustainability risks harming the very communities they claim to defend, all in the name of virtue signaling to an elite audience that prefers symbolism over substance.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.worldconstructiontoday.com/news/volvo-ce-voices-zero-emission-construction-equipment-need/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.volvoce.com/global/en/news-and-events/news-and-stories/2025/policy-and-industry-join-forces-in-london-to-tackle-urban-emissions-from-construction-equipment/> - During London Climate Action Week 2025, Volvo CE, the Swedish Embassy, and the Swedish Chamber of Commerce convened industry leaders, policymakers, and air quality advocates to address the urgent need for zero-emission construction equipment. The event highlighted that diesel compact machines, prevalent in urban areas, are significant contributors to air pollution and often exempt from low-emission zone regulations. The roundtable underscored the necessity for collaboration to accelerate the adoption of zero-emission alternatives to improve urban air quality.
3. <https://www.volvoce.com/global/en/news-and-events/news-and-stories/2025/volvo-ce-electrifies-bauma-2025-with-first-ever-zero-emission-only-lineup/> - Volvo CE unveiled its first-ever zero-emission-only lineup at Bauma 2025, showcasing an exclusive all-electric range of construction equipment. This initiative marks a significant milestone in Volvo CE's commitment to sustainable innovation, featuring models such as the upgraded 23-ton EC230 Electric mid-size excavator and the new EWR150 Electric, the company's first battery-powered wheeled excavator. The lineup also includes electric wheel loaders like the L120 Electric and L90 Electric, demonstrating Volvo CE's dedication to reducing environmental impact while maintaining superior customer performance.
4. <https://www.heavyquipmag.com/2025/03/10/volvo-to-provide-a-zero-emission-worksite-in-london/> - Volvo CE, in partnership with Transport for London (TfL) and contractor FM Conway, initiated a pioneering trial of zero-emission construction vehicles in London. The project aimed to improve pedestrian safety at Redcliffe Gardens by creating raised sections of road using electric excavators and wheel loaders. The trial demonstrated that electric construction vehicles could significantly reduce emissions, with early data confirming that in a two-week period, the electric excavator saved more than 100kg of CO2, equivalent to driving a car 600 kilometers.
5. <https://www.volvoce.com/europe/en/about-us/news/2025/compact-electric-machines-air-quality/> - Volvo CE highlighted the positive impact of electric compact machines on public health, noting that diesel compact machines emit more harmful pollutants than larger models, worsening urban air quality. The company emphasized that electric compact machines produce zero tailpipe emissions, offering a solution to reduce harmful pollutants in cities. In London, replacing diesel compact machines with electric alternatives could potentially cut harmful pollutants in half, providing a breath of fresh air for urban environments.
6. <https://www.recyclingproductnews.com/article/43451/volvo-ce-attends-talks-focused-on-reducing-emissions-from-construction-equipment> - During London's Climate Action Week 2025, Volvo CE participated in discussions with industry leaders, policymakers, and air quality advocates to address the urgent need for zero-emission construction equipment. The roundtable emphasized that diesel compact machines are significant contributors to urban air pollution and often exempt from low-emission zone regulations. The event underscored the necessity for collaboration to accelerate the adoption of zero-emission alternatives to improve urban air quality.
7. <https://www.scc.org.uk/resources/chamber-news/volvo-ce-laying-the-groundwork-for-sustainable-urban-construction> - Volvo CE, in collaboration with Charge Fairy, Transport for London (TfL), and FM Conway, introduced a UK-first solution for electrifying urban construction worksites using a mobile power source. The initiative addresses the challenge of reliable on-site charging for electric construction equipment, ensuring continuous operation without the need to leave the site for recharging. This approach supports TfL's goal to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2030 and demonstrates Volvo CE's commitment to sustainable urban construction practices.