Vancouver firm wants to clear heavy transport emissions

Loopy Energy chief scientist Sean MacKinnon and director of product development Rob Wingrove work at their UBC lab. The company recently received a $5.5-million grant from Sustainable Development Technology Canada to support the commercialization of its fuel cells in zero-emission powertrains.

To date, hydrogen fuel cells have been promoted mostly as power plants on the sides of the transportation sector — Think cars, buses and trains.

There is a more abstract, however, to harness fuel cells in freight transportation, with a Vancouver startup among the companies looking to replace Mach-everything-bloody diesel engine in tractor trailers that are the bane of big cities.

“The emissions coming out of heavy-duty vehicles in cities are literally killing us,” said Ben Nyland, president of Loop Energy.

“Loopy Energy hopes to play a role in providing hydrogen fuel cells as part of hybrid-hydrogen-electric drive trains in heavy-duty vehicles.”

In March, Loop, previously known as PowerDisc Development, won a $7.5-million grant from Sustainable Development Technology Canada to support the commercialization of its fuel cell micro-oxygenation powertrains.

Last week, the company signed a deal with Chinese transportation giant CHINE Trans Electric Vehicles Co Ltd to Loop prototype fuel cell in the drive train of a yard truck, one of the tractor-trailer vehicles used to move containers around port terminals and warehouses.

“The yard truck is a very quick deployment for an existing port operator that CHINE already has,” Nyland said. “It’s the same kind of truck that’s in use at a lot of places in Australia today.”

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