

## 《Mexico fights pollution by upgrading cabs》

Mexico City is fighting pollution levels by upgrading its taxis to include hybrids and electric cars. Will this work?

After a long day at work, psychologist Jorge Baez wanted to do something different. He decided to ride one of Mexico City's new electric taxis back to his house.

"I wanted to know how this new transportation system works in Mexico City. We have a very severe pollution problem, and I believe this is the beginning of something different," Baez said.

Two years ago, city government officials launched Mexico's electric taxis in hopes of reducing the city's smog levels. The city's air pollution has gotten so bad this year that the government has instituted driving bans aiming to take 40 percent of the cars off the road but the government still has a lot to do.

Last month, Mayor Miguel Angel Mancera announced that the taxi system would be greatly expanded and in the coming months, 10,000 taxis would switch to hybrid and electric vehicles. The mayor says that old regulations have hindered low-income housing construction within city limits—preventing those who want to live in the city but cannot. This has made more people commute to the city increasing pollution and traffic levels.

The expansion plan also includes government incentives by offering 3,000 dollars for taxi drivers to change their cars to hybrids or electric but some taxi drivers believe it isn't enough.

"I prefer to still use my gas car as a taxi because it is not as expensive as a hybrid or electric car. This car costs 58,000 pesos, and an electric car costs 500,000 pesos," said Ignacio Rodriguez, taxi driver.

Last week, federal and local government announced new emissions inspection regulations which would apply to trucks and buses for the first time. Under the new rules, vehicles will not be automatically grounded, but officials say emission inspections would be stricter. The government has also pledged to install dirty vehicle sensors that would alert police to stop and tow any violators.

And while these new regulations and the expansion of electric taxis may help bring down pollution levels, the greater use of electric cars will not solve Mexico City's other major problem—traffic.