

Alfredo Del Mazo Maza: Mexico Can Lead the Fight Against Invisible Emissions

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, August 20, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- While cities celebrate the historic drop in tailpipe emissions thanks to electrification, a study presented at the International Transport Forum (ITF) Summit in Leipzig warns that the problem is shifting: brake, tire, and road surface wear—known as [non-exhaust emissions](#) (NEE)—have already become the primary source of particles from ground transportation.



Moving toward a truly sustainable transportation system requires a firm commitment to investment and innovation.”

Alfredo Del Mazo Maza

The report, commissioned by EIT Urban Mobility and conducted by the consultancy e:misia with Transport for London (TfL) and the Greater London Authority as case studies, reveals that in cities like London, Milan, and Barcelona, NEE account for between 68% and 88% of PM10 from traffic and up to 78% of PM2.5.

Fine particles (PM2.5) remain the deadliest air pollutant. In 2022, 96% of the European Union's urban population breathed concentrations above the World Health Organization's (WHO) 5 µg/m³ limit. The global picture is no better: the WHO estimates that 99% of the world's population lives with exposure levels exceeding its protective guidelines.

Mexico is no exception. The 2020 Emissions Inventory of the Metropolitan Area of the Valley of Mexico shows that transportation accounted for 41% of total PM10 and 42% of total PM2.5, even in an atypical year marked by the pandemic. Nationwide, exposure to PM2.5 is associated with more than 36,000 premature deaths annually, according to the National Institute of Ecology and Climate Change (INECC) and the Health Effects Institute.

The Role of Brakes and Tires

The European study confirms that brake wear is now the most significant contributor to NEE in urban areas: more than 40% of the particles released remain suspended in the air. Tire dust is also a concern; while much of it settles on asphalt, it eventually washes into drainage systems and ends up in rivers and oceans as microplastics. Stop-and-go driving, typical of large cities, exacerbates both sources.

The upcoming Euro 7 standards will set limits for brake emissions in 2026 and for tire emissions in 2028, but they will only apply to new vehicles. The study estimates that if the entire fleet

switched to low-wear components ahead of schedule, London could see net social benefits of €235 million by 2050—a figure that would grow if private car use were discouraged.

Mexico: Opportunity for Leadership

In Mexico, NOM-044 and NOM-045 standards mainly regulate tailpipe emissions for heavy-duty and light vehicles. There is still no specific standard for NEE. The Mexico City Environment Secretariat acknowledges that resuspended dust—including that from tire and pavement friction—“is the most difficult fraction to mitigate” and has proposed lowering speed limits and making ceramic brake pads mandatory for public transport. However, the measure has yet to be enacted as a federal regulation.

“Cities that fail to tackle friction emissions now are doomed to lose the gains made against diesel soot,” warns [Alfredo Del Mazo Maza](#), public policy specialist and former governor of the State of Mexico. The mobility consultant stresses that “moving toward a truly sustainable transportation system requires a firm commitment to investment and innovation.”

He points to Oslo and Hong Kong as examples, where regenerative braking, low-abrasion pavement, and the expansion of electric public transport are combined.

“This model could be replicated in Mexican cities if regulatory and financing aspects are aligned,” Del Mazo Maza noted.

Evidence suggests that even if every car were electric tomorrow, brake and tire wear would still pollute the air and waterways. The EIT Urban Mobility study aligns with local assessments, noting that reducing private vehicle use has a climate and health impact five times greater than electrifying the fleet without changing habits.

For Alfredo Del Mazo Maza, the urgency is twofold. “Fighting friction particles not only saves lives; it also makes our cities more competitive and equitable. With regulations aligned to the most advanced standards, investment in clean public transport, and a strong focus on active mobility, Mexico can get ahead of this new front in urban pollution and turn an overlooked threat into an opportunity for innovation,” he concluded.

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