BYD leads US market for electric trucks

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By AARON HAGSTROM in New York |   
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BYD, the China-headquartered electric vehicle manufacturer, is expanding into the US market for electric short-haul trucks and, outside of a few startups, has few challengers.  
The Lancaster, California-based BYD – which began its US operations in 2011 with electric buses – offers medium and heavy-duty trucks designed for short-hauls and vehicles for seaport and railyard businesses. Those customers include BNSF Railway and tenants of the ports of Los Angeles, Long Beach and San Diego.  
In November, BYD -- which stands for "Build Your Dreams" and is backed by Warren Buffet -- delivered its first electric automated side-loader garbage truck to the California city of Palo Alto in electric automaker Tesla's back yard. The truck has a range of 76 miles per charge and the city projects fuel and maintenance cost savings of more than $16,000 annually.  
Missouri-based startup Orange EV exclusively focuses on terminal trucks but does not build them from the ground up, instead retrofitting its electric motors into diesel truck bodies.  
Los Angeles-based startup Chanje Energy Inc exclusively sells medium-duty electric delivery vans, and builds them in China. In December, Chanje began to deliver 125 of the vans to Ryder System Inc, and they are now available for lease or rent.  
Long-haul electric trucks may not be manufactured in the US until 2019 because of heavy batteries and the hours-long charging requirements, which limit freight carried and distance traveled.  
Price is also a problem. A medium-duty electric truck costs about $70,000 more than an equivalent diesel truck, according to the consulting firm Deloitte.  
Trucks must meet stricter US emissions standards through 2027 under rules that went into effect in 2016. China is also tightening emissions standards.  
Diesel-powered short-haul trucks cause disproportionate levels of pollution because of stop-and-go driving.  
More than six percent of greenhouse gas emissions emitted in the US in 2015 came from medium and heavy-duty trucks, according to a report issued in July by the Environmental Protection Agency.  
Vehicle manufacturers have a prime sales market in California because the state has the nation's strictest air-quality rules.  
In 2016, the San Bernardino Associated Governments (SANBAG) used $9.1 million in funds from proceeds of the state's cap-and-trade system to buy 27 BYD trucks to replace diesel-powered tractors.  
The trucks will be used by freight hauler Daylight Transport at its Fontana transfer facility and by BNSF Railway at rail yards in San Bernardino and Commerce.

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