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# Northern Refrigerated Transforms TRU Electrification with ESL's eTRUconnect Docking Stations

Discover how Northern Refrigerated cut diesel costs by up to 65% with ESL's eTRUconnect?. A proven case study in efficiency, compliance, and ROI.

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## Overview

In the high-demand world of refrigerated logistics, reliability, cost-efficiency, and environmental responsibility are critical drivers. Northern Refrigerated Transportation, a major player in cold chain logistics, faced growing pressure to optimize their trailer refrigeration unit (TRU) operations across their West Coast facilities. With a rising number of refrigeration units hitting a "critical mass," the company recognized the time had come to invest in infrastructure that could support electric TRU connections, ultimately leading them to ESL Power Systems and the [eTRUconnect](#) solution.

## The Search for the Right Solution

Before selecting ESL, Northern Refrigerated explored multiple electrification options. "We tried two other vendors," shared Daniel Watson, CFO. "One had non-standardized connections, which made operations cumbersome, and the other offered lower product quality despite a cheaper price point. It came down to the old saying, *you get what you pay for.*"

What sealed the deal for ESL? "The quality of the product stood out immediately," said Watson. "Our electrician loved them." This endorsement from a hands-on expert within their team proved to be a deciding factor.

## Implementation: Overcoming Obstacles and Scaling Smartly

Although the lack of an onsite facility manager posed a challenge during the rollout, Northern's in-house electrician played a pivotal role in ensuring a smooth installation process. ESL's eTRUconnect® units were praised for being "easy to work with" and robust in design.

Northern's journey with ESL wasn't without feedback; and that's where the partnership truly showed its strength. An initial issue with water ingress in the TRU cord connections was identified, and ESL quickly responded by redesigning the component. In fact, improvements were already underway before the concern was formally raised. "It took time to explain the need for a change, but ESL had already started making it better," Watson reported.

## Sustainability: Savings Without Compromise

While return on investment (ROI) was Northern's top priority, the company saw notable sustainability benefits as a byproduct of ESL's solution. In Northern California and Oregon facilities, the company reported savings of 60–65% per hour compared to diesel usage, and

50–55% per hour savings in Southern California. Additionally, they calculated approximately \$1 per hour in reduced preventative maintenance and repair costs for diesel-powered TRUs.

These savings became even more impactful when Northern implemented accountability measures, which further ramped up operational efficiency. “As infrastructure is added, cost savings will increase,” Watson noted. “We began by electrifying TRUs at dock doors, and just recently started installing stations for untethered trailers, which will continue to improve ROI.”

[Calculate how much your facility can save by switching to shore power.](#)

### **Service and Support: A True Partnership**

Northern emphasized the quality of service received from ESL, especially citing ESL Product Manager, Jonathan Daou for his responsive and attentive support. “ESL is our partner due to the quality of the product,” Watson added. Starting with just ten TRU stations, Northern rapidly scaled their investment, adding 43 more units within the month.

The trust built during these projects has solidified ESL as a long-term partner. “After trying other vendors, ESL is clearly the right partner,” Watson stated. “Their staff communicates well, and our experience overall has been exceptional.”


### **Key Takeaways and Recommendations**

For companies looking to electrify their refrigeration operations, Northern had a few pieces of advice:

- **Expect high quality from ESL**, especially appreciated by in-the-field installers like electricians.
- **Monitor for regulatory incentives.** Facilities in California and Oregon may qualify for electrification rebates. Northern recommended using rebate service providers like FUSE, which handles calculations and filings for a nominal fee.
- **Provide feedback early.** ESL proved to be highly responsive to product improvement suggestions.

### **Final Word**

When asked to sum up their experience with ESL in one sentence, Northern Refrigerated responded simply:

 The quality of ESL products and staff are exceptional.”

In an industry where reliability, support, and long-term value are non-negotiable, Northern Refrigerated's story demonstrates how ESL's **eTRUconnect** shore power product can deliver a powerful, scalable solution that meets operational demands while also paving the way for a more sustainable future.

### **Ready to Power Your TRU Electrification Goals?**

Discover how ESL's eTRUconnect can help your fleet reduce diesel costs, improve efficiency, and stay ahead of evolving regulations, just like Northern Refrigerated.

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