



For Immediate Release  
August 20, 2010

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## OEC calls on Columbus City Council to help motorists clear the air + save at the pump by passing fuel conservation ordinance

Plan can conserve 21 million gallons of fuel, save consumers \$48 million

Columbus, OH – The Ohio Environmental Council today called on Columbus City Council to adopt a fuel conservation ordinance to limit the needless idling of buses, trucks, and cars.

The OEC estimates the proposal can conserve the use of 21 million gallons of gasoline and diesel fuel, reducing air emissions by several tons and save Franklin County motorists \$48 million in fuel costs.

Under the proposal, motorists could idle their vehicle engine no more than 5 minutes in a 60 minute period when the outdoor temperature is between 32 and 85 degrees.

The following would be exempt from the ordinance:

- a vehicle crawling through a traffic jam;
- a vehicle experiencing mechanical difficulty;
- emergency vehicles;
- semi-trucks idling with a clean auxiliary power unit;
- all vehicles, when the outdoor temperature is below 32 above 85 degrees.
- See below for additional exemptions.

Similar ordinances have been adopted in dozens of cities, counties, and states around the country, including Cleveland.

The OEC's goal is to reduce ground-level ozone pollution, which can inflame lung tissue and trigger asthma attacks and other health problems.

Like an invisible thief, ozone pollution can accompany hot summer days, robbing the breathing capacity of the young, the old, and anyone who works or exercises outdoors.

Ozone pollution forms when nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds cook in the long, hot, sunny days of summer. Local authorities have issued eight air quality alert days thus far this year for central Ohio.

Tailpipe exhaust from cars, trucks and other mobile sources account for 69% of ozone-forming nitrogen oxide pollution in Franklin County. According to Ohio EPA data, cars, trucks, and buses emitted more than 25,000 tons of nitrogen oxide in 2009, a common ozone precursor.

“Ozone pollution has hit central Ohio like a freight train,” states David R. Celebrezze, Director of Air & Water Special Projects. “The health and economic consequences of poor air quality are well known. We need Columbus City Council to implement a simple and effective solution that everyone can practice: no-idling.”

Consequences to failing to meet federal clean air standards include vehicle emissions testing, emissions offsets for businesses, and the withholding of federal highway construction funds.

“I do not understand why an employer would allow their vehicles to idle and waste fuel and money, when a simple action like turning the key could save thousands of dollars each year,” says Bob Shamansky who works downtown.

Unnecessarily idling of cars and trucks emits a dangerous stew of fumes, some of which are known carcinogens. Diesel exhaust includes particulate matter, benzene, formaldehyde, nitrogen oxides, and more. Gasoline vehicles emit carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, sulfur dioxide, and more. These fumes have been linked to asthma attacks, painful breathing, heart and lung disease, and even early death.

According to the Clean Air Task Force, the annual diesel fine particle pollution health impacts projected in 2010 for Franklin County include:

- 63 Premature Deaths
- 82 Non-Fatal Heart Attacks
- 1,522 Asthma Attacks
- 42 Chronic Bronchitis
- 9,316 Work Loss Days (WLD)
- 53,641 Minor Restricted Activity Days (MRAD)

“We can either be ahead of the curve and improve our air quality or we can play catch up,” states Celebrezze. “Keep in mind the longer we wait means more emergency room visits for children and adults with asthma, more heart attacks, and decreased lung function in those with respiratory illnesses. We need Columbus City Council to step up and help clear the air and help commuters conserve fuel and save money at the pump.”

Model ordinance:

Fuel Conservation language

- a.) **The purpose** of this law is to protect public health and the environment by reducing emissions while conserving fuel, maintaining adequate rest and safety of all drivers of diesel and gasoline powered vehicles, and removing barriers to economic development imposed by the state’s air quality status under the federal Clean Air Act.
- b.) **Applicability.** As used in this section, “vehicle” has the same meaning as in section 4511.01 of the Ohio Revised Code.
- c.) **General requirement.** Except as provided in section (d) of this section,
  - (1) the owner or operator of a vehicle shall not cause or allow a vehicle to idle for more than 5 minutes in any 60-minute period; and
  - (2) the owner or operator of a vehicle that is loading or unloading at a loading dock or loading/unloading area, and the operator of the

loading dock or loading/unloading area, shall not cause or allow a vehicle to idle in that area for more than 10 minutes in any 60 minute period.

d.) **Exemptions.** Section (c) of this section does not apply when:

- (1) The outdoor temperature is below 32 degrees Fahrenheit or above 85 degrees Fahrenheit. However, idling is limited to 10 minutes in any 60 minute period.
- (2) To prevent a safety or health emergency, a vehicle idles when operating defrosters, heaters, air conditioners, or when installing equipment.
- (3) A vehicle idles while forced to remain motionless because of on-highway traffic, an official traffic control device or signal, or at the direction of a law enforcement official.
- (4) A police, fire, ambulance, public safety, military, other emergency or law enforcement vehicle, or any vehicle being used in an emergency capacity, idles while in an emergency or training mode, or to maintain communications, and not solely for the convenience of the vehicle operator.
- (5) The primary propulsion engine idles for maintenance, servicing, repair, or diagnostic purposes if idling is required for such activity, or idles as part of a state or federal inspection to verify that all equipment is in good working order, provided idling is required as part of the inspection.
- (6) Idling of the primary propulsion engine is necessary to power work-related mechanical or electrical operations other than propulsion (e.g., mixing or processing cargo or straight truck refrigeration). This exemption does not apply when idling for cabin comfort or to operate non-essential on-board equipment.
- (7) An armored vehicle idle when a person remains inside the vehicle to guard the contents, or while the vehicle is being loaded or unloaded.
- (8) An occupied vehicle with a sleeper berth compartment idles for the purposes of air conditioning or heating during a required rest or sleep period.
- (9) A vehicle idles due to mechanical difficulties over which the driver has no control.
- (10) A vehicle is only operating an auxiliary power unit, generator set, or other mobile idle reduction technology as a means to heat, air condition, or provide electrical power as an alternative to idling the main engine.
- (11) A vehicle is actively engaged in work upon the surface of a street or highway, including construction, cleaning, and snow removal activities, and the operator is in the vehicle.

e.) **Penalty.** Whoever violates this section shall be guilty of a minor misdemeanor.

f.) **Idle Reduction enforcement.** The director of Public Safety (or Chief of Police) may designate appropriated employees to enforce this section and to issue citations for any violations of this section.

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The mission of the Ohio Environmental Council (OEC) is to secure healthy air, land, and water for all who call Ohio home. The OEC is Ohio's leading advocate for fresh air, clean water, and sustainable land use. The OEC has a 40-year history of innovation, pragmatism, and success. Using legislative initiatives, legal action, scientific principles, and statewide partnerships, the OEC secures a healthier environment for Ohio's families and communities. For more information, visit [www.theOEC.org](http://www.theOEC.org).