



Press Release

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CONTACT

David R. Celebrezze, OEC

614-487-7506

614-668-1530 (cell)

OEC aids local cities in meeting federal air quality standards

A Supplemental Environmental Project allows eco-group to help cities purchase diesel emission controls for municipal vehicles

CLEVELAND, OHIO – The Ohio Environmental Council will give \$24,000 combined to Cleveland, Cleveland Heights, and Parma Heights to purchase diesel emission controls. Due to a consent decree between the United State, State of Ohio, and Premcor, the Lima Refinery agreed to pay the OEC \$50,000 for the installation of diesel retrofit technology on municipal trucks and buses. This decree is a result of the US EPA and Ohio EPA identifying violations of certain provisions of the Clean Air Act by Premcor. The remaining \$26,000 will be spent in other nonattainment areas and a small portion to administer this money.

The City of Cleveland will receive \$14,000; City of Cleveland Heights \$5,000; Parma Heights \$5,000.

“This gift to the cities recognizes their diesel clean up activities and encourages them to continue being green until the last dirty diesel is no more,” states David R. Celebrezze , Director of Air & Water Special Projects of the OEC. “Diesel pollution is a dangerous brew that is harming the citizens of Ohio in terms of health and our economy.”

If Cuyahoga County does not meet federal air quality standards it could face penalties such as emission off-sets and federal highway money being withheld. Diesel pollution contributes to nearly a third of Ohio’s counties failing federal air quality standards for ozone pollution and particle pollution.

According to the United States EPA, diesel exhaust can harm human health, increase global climate change, and even threaten local economic growth.

“This money will help us achieve our goal of greening our fleet and reducing harmful diesel emissions through the installation of additional emission controls.” states Andrew Watterson, Sustainability Program Director for the City of Cleveland. “Our no-idle policy and GIS route planning has helped us increase service to residents while improving fuel efficiency. Mayor Jackson has mandated the reduction of fuel consumption and continues to challenge city employees to improve efficiency.”

Cleveland Heights has implemented a no idle policy for its drivers and has received grant(s) in the past to fit their diesel vehicles with pollution controls. Mayor Ed Kelley states, "Cleaning up our fleet is but one of many initiatives we are undertaken to reduce our environmental impact and improve the quality of life for our citizens. OEC's gift will help us achieve our goals a little bit quicker."

Parma Heights has a no idle policy and is working on retrofitting its fleet with diesel oxidation catalysts and diesel particulate filters. Joseph Sebes, Director of Human Services, states, "Given tight budgets due to the economy, this money will help us reduce pollution and contribute to cleaner air for our residents."

Diesel oxidation catalysts are an emission control device that uses a chemical process to break down pollutants in the exhaust stream into less harmful components. It has a porous ceramic honeycomb-like structure that is coated with a material that catalyzes a chemical reaction to reduce pollution. Other pollution controls include diesel particulate filters (reduce diesel emissions by up to 90%) and level II devices (reduce diesel emissions by up to 70%).

According to government scientists, diesel exhaust contains harmful pollutants, such as particulate matter (soot), nitrogen oxides, hydrocarbons, and over 40 air toxins, including benzene - a known carcinogen. This toxic stew contributes to a host of health ailments including asthma attacks, painful breathing, cancer, and preventable deaths. An American Cancer Society study estimates that exposure to particulate matter from diesel fumes poses the same risk as inhaling second-hand cigarette smoke.

The three cities are taking steps to implement the 6 R's of diesel clean up: **Retrofit** with modern pollution controls; **Refuel** with cleaner fuels; **Rebuild/repair**; **Reduce** idling; **Repower with new engines**; and **Replace** older vehicles with newer ones. Other cities throughout Ohio can emulate Cleveland, Cleveland Heights, and Parma Heights in cleaning up their diesel fleets.

The OEC is urging the state and federal governments to step up support for diesel clean up by:

- increasing funding the Ohio Diesel Emission Reduction Grant Program to \$30 million for the next two fiscal years;
- fully funding the federal Diesel Emission Reduction Grant Program to \$200 million a year.

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The Ohio Environmental Council's mission is to secure healthy air, land and water for all who call Ohio home. www.theoec.org.