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Contact: David R. Celebrezze
(614) 487-7506 (office)
david@theOEC.org

Local school district continues investment in “green” school buses

State-wide eco-group and business team up with Gahanna-Jefferson Local Schools on diesel clean-up project

Gahanna, OH – Gahanna-Jefferson Local Schools completed installation of emission controls on two buses. The Ohio Environmental Council and Half Price Books, Inc. teamed up to donate money to the school district for two diesel oxidation catalysts (DOCs) and two closed crankcase ventilation systems (CCVS). Combined, these controls will reduce pollution by as much as 30%. Gahanna-Jefferson Schools are installing pollution control devices that are the most cost effective means to reduce diesel pollution from school buses.

“Clearly diesel pollution is chock-full of harmful matter,” said David R. Celebrezze, Director of Air & Water Special Projects for the Ohio Environmental Council. “Children riding on an old, unretrofitted bus are being adversely impacted by diesel fumes. We are proud to help Gahanna-Jefferson Schools continue making their fleet green.”

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. A Clean Air Task Force report revealed that diesel soot impacts in Franklin County include hundreds of asthma attacks and thousands of lost work days each year. In fact, the lifetime cancer risk from diesel soot in Stark County is 400 times greater than the U.S. EPA’s acceptable cancer level of 1 in a million.

According to the EPA, diesel exhaust can:

- Trigger asthma attacks and cause lung damage, heart disease, cancer, and early death.
- Cause acid rain, ozone smog, haze, and global climate change.
- Drive up costs for business from lost work days caused by air pollution-related illness and by forcing counties in non-attainment areas to offset increases in emissions.

Half Price Books, Records, Magazines, inc. donated \$12,500 for four diesel oxidation catalysts and closed crankcase ventilation systems. The OEC identified the fleet for the retrofits. The retrofits were installed by Gahanna Jefferson Schools mechanics and Center City International.

Gahanna Jefferson Local Schools has taken action to reduce harmful diesel emissions and the state of Ohio can do its part. Other sources of diesel emission include construction equipment. Twenty-one percent of all diesel particle pollution in the state is from construction equipment. To combat this pollution elected officials should:

- Require clean construction requirements so that all public works projects sized \$2 million and larger to install emission controls on those vehicles or convert them to natural gas;
- Reauthorize the Diesel Emission Reduction Grant program to its current funding levels;
- Cities should adopt fuel conservation ordinances.

“Clean construction requirements can go a long way in meeting air quality standards,” said Celebrezze. “Public dollars should not be spent on polluting.”

The diesel oxidation catalyst, according to the US EPA, is an emission control that uses a chemical process to break down pollutants in the exhaust stream into less harmful pollutants. Specifically, it is a device with a porous ceramic honeycomb-like structure that is coated with a material that catalyzes a chemical reaction to reduce pollution.

Another pollution control is the closed crankcase ventilation system (CCVS), which reroutes emissions created by the combustion process of engines. A study by the Clean Air Task Force estimates that as much as 25% of school bus emissions originate in the crankcase. CCVS eliminate up to 90% of these emissions and last up to five years.

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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.