



[UNLEASHING THE POWER OF GREEN]

Press Release

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New Year's Resolution: Public transportation good for the environment especially if buses are running clean

Eco Group lists resolutions for the Central Ohio Transit Authority to make 2009 the year of the green bus

COLUMBUS, OHIO – The Ohio Environmental Council makes resolutions for public transportation authority to optimize the greening of their diesel fleet in 2009.

The Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA) transports near 15 million fixed-route passengers and operates 234 active buses. Public transportation relieves congestion, saves passengers money, provides a safe mode of transportation, offers mobility choices, reduces gas consumption, and lessens America's dependence on foreign oil.

“Public transportation is a great service to our communities that needs to expand, however, old, dirty diesel buses that are still on the road, need to be retrofitted with pollution control devices for the health of the driver, passengers, and our communities,” states David R. Celebrezze Director of Air & Water Special Projects at the Ohio Environmental Council.

According to the US EPA diesel exhaust is a significant source of air pollution in Ohio. They account for nearly a third (29%) all emissions of nitrogen oxides and 14% of air toxics in the Buckeye State. Diesel exhaust also is a significant source of microscopic particle pollution, or soot.

Franklin County is failing minimum federal air quality standards for particle pollution and ozone. Should the state fail to meet the minimum standard, it could face costly penalties such as vehicle emissions testing, emission off sets and/or withholding highway construction funds.

Using either a diesel particulate filter or compressed natural gas, can reduce diesel “soot” by as much as 90%. Biodiesel 100 can reduce the emissions by up to 70%.

According to government scientists, diesel exhaust can:

- Trigger asthma attacks and cause lung damage, 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

Diesel exhaust contains known and probable carcinogens such as benzene and formaldehyde.

“In order to see big reductions in this toxic brew, COTA should purchase retrofit technologies, run on compressed natural gas, or purchase B-100 (biodiesel 100). Anything less is short changing their passengers and our communities,” states David R. Celebrezze, the OEC.

Replacing older buses with newer buses is important; however, one new bus can cost as much as \$80,000. It will replace one old dirty bus, but if that money was spent purchasing diesel particulate filters, it would clean up 10 buses. Diesel retrofit technologies are one of the most cost-effective means to reducing on road diesel pollution.

All 2007 and newer on road, heavy duty diesel vehicles are equipped with a diesel particulate filter which reduces diesel emissions by up to 90%. However, the health benefits will not be fully realized until the entire fleet turns over estimated by 2030. In the meantime there are anywhere from 11 to 13 million dirty diesel engines on the road in the United States.

“To make 2009 the ‘year of the green bus’ COTA needs to get in gear with clean diesel technology that is already being used by the City of Columbus, Columbus Public Schools, and other fleets in the area,” says Celebrezze. “There are grant opportunities COTA can take advantage of to purchase diesel filters for pennies on the dollar. In fact, one grant will cover 80 cents for every dollar spent by COTA on diesel particulate filters.”

COTA’s New Year’s resolutions should be:

- Retrofit all 1995 to 2005 buses with diesel particulate filters which reduce diesel soot by as much as 90%.
- Retrofit all 1991 to 1994 with level II emission reduction technologies which reduce diesel soot by as much as 70%.
- Retire all 1990 and older buses.

While we credit COTA for receiving grants for replacing a small portion of their fleet, it will take years to replace the entire fleet. Diesel retrofits provide the most cost effective means of cleaning up their diesel fleet. Now we need the leadership from COTA to make 2009 the year of the green bus.

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The mission of the Ohio Environmental Council (www.theoec.org) is to secure healthy air, land, and water for all who call Ohio home. The OEC is a network of more than 100 local and state environmental-conservation organizations.