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U.S. EPA awards OEC \$394,000 to clean up municipal diesel fleets in Cleveland Heights, Parma Heights, Worthington and Columbus airport

Emission reduction technology to be deployed on government vehicles to improve our health, environment, and economy.

Columbus, OH – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced today a diesel retrofit grant award to the Ohio Environmental Council in the amount of \$394,589. This award comes from the U.S. EPA's Region 5's Midwest Clean Diesel Initiative. The OEC is one of 13 groups in the 6-state Midwest region to be awarded a grant.

“We are pleased to help local governments clean up their diesel vehicles. This is good for our health, environment, and economy,” said David R. Celebrezze, Director of Air and Water Special Projects at the OEC. “Diesel pollution has a solution and this grant will help enable the municipal governments of Cleveland Heights, Parma Heights and Worthington along with the Columbus Regional Airport Authority to equip their fleets with emission and idle reduction technologies to reduce diesel pollution. We applaud them in being ahead of the curve to clean up dangerous diesel exhaust while also extending the life of their vehicles.”

The Columbus Regional Airport Authority is slated to retrofit 16 diesel vehicles with technologies which will reduce emissions up to 90%. “We are pleased to be part of this grant,” said Paul Kennedy, Supervisor, Energy & Environment of the Columbus Regional Airport Authority. “The Airport Authority continues to pursue sustainable practices and our ability to manage diesel emissions is just one example of our commitment to sustainability. Not only will we realize an environmental benefit, but these fleet improvements will provide our mechanics and operators with first-hand experience on the use and care of emission-reduction technology.”

The City of Worthington is slated to retrofit 8 diesel vehicles with diesel particulate filters, which can reduce emissions by up to 90%. “This grant allows us to be proactive in addressing diesel emissions. Our citizens can breathe a sigh of relief and know that the City is doing all it can to be responsible and improve the air quality,” said Robert Chandler of the Worthington Department of Public Services.

Cleveland Heights will receive money to retrofit 5 of their vehicles with diesel particulate filters which will reduce their emissions by as much as 90%. “Healthy air just makes sense. We are making great strides to improve the air in our community for those who call

Cleveland Heights home,” stated Andre’ Spencer, Assistant Director of Public Works Cleveland Heights.

Parma Heights is slated to retrofit 9 service department vehicles with diesel particulate filters and other technology which will reduce each vehicle’s emissions by as much as 90%. “Diesel pollution is a real problem, but, with this grant, we will be able to retrofit the bulk of our service department diesel fleet. This will positively improve the quality of life for the residents of our community by reducing emissions ” said Joseph Sebes, Director of Human Services at Parma Heights.

Diesel exhaust contains known and probable carcinogens such as benzene and formaldehyde. It also contains particulate matter, particles that are only 1/30th the width of a human hair. Particle pollution is so small that, according to medical scientists, it can be inhaled deeply into a person’s lungs and actually can penetrate the bloodstream.

According to government scientists, 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.

According to the US EPA, 29% of all diesel particle pollution comes from heavy duty trucks.

The OEC will implement this grant for Worthington, Cleveland Heights, Parma Heights and the Columbus Regional Airport Authority. The OEC has a strong diesel clean up campaign and has helped cities and school districts around the state to reduce harmful emissions through the purchase and installation of diesel retrofit technology. To date, the OEC has impacted over 300 diesel vehicles through nearly \$2 million in competitive grants.

The grant will help Cuyahoga and Franklin counties reach minimum federal air quality standards. A county that fails to attain the standards may face, sanctions, including expansion or initiation of the E-Check vehicle emissions reduction program, emissions offsets, and the withholding of highway funds.

The OEC is encouraging the State of Ohio to advance clean air by:

*Funding the successful Ohio Diesel Emission Reduction Grant to at least \$20 million a year through sustainable funding sources.

*Adopting a no-idling policy for state vehicles.

*Adopting a state-wide no-idling policy for all vehicles.

* Requiring all public works projects sized \$2 million and larger to use diesel equipment that reduces emissions by at least 85%.

The OEC encourages cities around the state to reduce their diesel footprint by:

*Adopting city-wide no-idling ordinances.

*Requiring all public works contracts to have emission reduction standards.

*Developing a comprehensive diesel clean up plan for their fleet.

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For more information about diesel emission impacts and solutions please visit
www.theoec.org.

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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.