



## Statement, David R. Celebrezze, Director of Air and Land Special Projects

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Picture this: You have trouble breathing and you need to call the ambulance. Medical technicians arrive on the scene and are so concerned about your condition that they transport you to the hospital. However, as you are entering the ambulance, things get worse. Just as the ambulance pulls away, it emits a black cloud of exhaust from the tailpipe. The exhaust aggravates your breathing.

For many years this has been the situation. Trained medical professionals who devote their lives to giving the best possible care to people in a medical emergency, yet the very vehicle that they rely on to get a victim to the hospital is making matters worse by chugging out diesel pollution.

Diesel engine exhaust is hazardous to human health. The United States EPA has identified diesel exhaust as a probable carcinogen. In fact, there are over 40 known toxins such as formaldehyde and benzene that come out of a diesel tailpipe. To compound this health hazard, diesel exhaust also includes particulate matter—particles so small that they penetrate the lung and pass into the bloodstream.

According to government researchers, diesel emissions:

- 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—such as Cuyahoga County—to offset increases in emissions.

We pay too high a price for sitting around and not addressing this issue. Toni Temple understands this and that is why she took action and connected Parma Heights with the Ohio Environmental Council. The OEC received funds from a Supplemental Environmental Project to go towards municipal diesel clean up. Now, Parma Heights is a state leader in diesel clean up efforts. This ambulance represents the first ambulance in the state to be retrofitted with pollution control devices which will reduce that harmful smell by 40%. The diesel oxidation catalyst takes care of the tail pipe emissions and the closed crankcase ventilation system takes care of the in-cabin emissions. We will hear about them in a moment.

These retrofits also will help Cuyahoga County meet federal air quality standards for ozone and particle pollution. If we do not meet these standards we could be looking at an expansion of E-check and/or highway funds being withheld from the state. But we can help avoid this if other cities follow Parma Heights lead.

We commend Parma Heights on its diesel clean up efforts-no idle policy for its fleet, applications for grant programs to retrofit their fleet, and now, retrofitting their ambulances. In this economy it is no small task to clean up diesel emissions, but the City has demonstrated that public health is a top priority for them.

Other cities should develop strong no-idling policies for their city-owned vehicles; they should apply for grants to retrofit their fleets with state-of-the-art pollution control devices.

But we need to take it a step further. Construction equipment makes up 21% of all diesel particle pollution in the state. The state of Ohio should require all construction projects \$2million and above to reduce their emissions by at least 20% now and starting by 2013 by 85%.

Cleaning up diesel emissions from construction or ambulances means easier breathing, less asthma attacks, and fewer trips to the emergency room. It means creating a healthy environment, community, and economy.

It means we can all breathe a little easier and enjoy a little higher quality of life in Parma Heights.

Thank you.