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Press statement of David R. Celebrezze OEC Director of Air & Water Special Projects

The state and federal government have the opportunity to give a one-two punch against bad air. Every day, each of us breathes in 2,000 gallons of air. If that was water, and that water was polluted with known carcinogens and other things, we would not touch it. Yet when it comes to dirty air, we do not have much of a choice. We have all been around that dirty diesel engine on that car, truck, bus, or piece of construction equipment.

But what is in that pollution?

Diesel pollution is a toxic stew of known and probable carcinogens. These dangerous compounds include benzene, formaldehyde, volatile organic compounds, and particulate matter. Particulate matter, also known as PM 2.5 can be as small as 1/30th the width of a human hair—small enough to get by the protective filters in our airways. According to government and medical researchers, this particle pollution:

- Triggers asthma attacks and causes lung damage, heart disease, cancer, and early death.
- Causes acid rain, ozone smog, haze, and global climate change.
- Drives 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 by restricting new economic growth.

According to the Clean Air Task Force, the diesel soot cancer risk in Franklin County is 223 times greater than the U.S. EPA's acceptable level. Medical research at The Ohio State University revealed that exposure to diesel pollution increases the mechanism for solid tumor growth.

Diesel and gasoline engines emit nitrogen dioxide and volatile organic compounds. When these pollutants mix with the extended sunlight hours of summer, they create a Frankenstein monster known as ozone pollution.

According to the U.S. EPA, numerous scientific studies have linked ground-level ozone exposure to a variety of health problems, including:

- airway irritation, coughing, and pain when taking a deep breath;
- wheezing and breathing difficulties during exercise or outdoor activities;
- inflammation of the lung, which is much like a sunburn on the skin;
- aggravation of asthma and increased susceptibility to respiratory illnesses like pneumonia and bronchitis; and,
- permanent lung damage with repeated exposures.

Children are vulnerable because they breathe 50% more air per pound of body weight than adults. Each year in Ohio, according to the Clean Air Task Force, diesel soot leads to \$3.6 billion in additional health care costs. It results in hundreds of additional Emergency Room visits by children with asthma

and tens of thousands of lost work days. Heavy equipment operators exposed to diesel exhaust have a 47% increased risk of death due to heart attacks.

Ohio is hit hard by diesel soot pollution:

Adults

409 Premature Deaths

392 Non-Fatal Heart Attacks

48,969 Work Loss Days (WLD)

Children

408 Asthma ER Visits

559 Acute Bronchitis

7,157 Lower Respiratory Symptoms

5,460 Upper Respiratory Symptoms

12,095 Asthma Exacerbation

The good news is that affordable, common-sense solutions exist to solve this problem—including emission control equipment for diesel-powered vehicles, cleaner fuels, and more fuel-efficient vehicles.

Today, the OEC is calling on Senator Portman to co-sponsor the Clean Construction Act of 2011 introduced by Senator Carper of Delaware. Sen. Carper was one of the co-founders of the Diesel Emission Reduction Act. The other founder was then-senator Voinovich.

The bill incorporates the use of cleaner construction equipment on federally-funded transportation projects in areas that are failing air quality standards for particulate matter.

The bill provides existing federal transportation funding to retrofit, repower and upgrade equipment to provide the maximum-achievable reduction of diesel soot emissions. No more than 1% of a transportation project cost to upgrade dirty construction equipment. Given there are more than 50,000 pieces of construction equipment in the state and this bill would not cost the fleets to purchase and install, it is a win-win for Ohio.

You have to ask: Doesn't the public deserve 1% for clean air?

Keep funding for the Diesel Emission Reduction Act (DERA)

DERA was created in 2005 by then-senator Voinovich and passed the Senate 92-1. Since its creation, Ohio has reaped millions in funds to clean up school buses, highway trucks, rail, and construction fleets. According to the U.S. EPA, for every dollar invested in DERA \$12-\$20 in health care benefits are realized. Public and private fleets have utilized this important program to reduce diesel emission pollution. Congress and President Obama should reauthorize the program at 2008 levels of \$50 million a year. We call on Ohio's Congressional Delegation to support this critical program.

Keep funding for the State's Ohio Diesel Emission Reduction Grant program

Ohio's Diesel Emission Reduction Grant (DERG) program is part of the solution. It provides financial support to upgrade and/or retrofit these higher emitting diesel engines with state of the art technology that can dramatically reduce emissions. All regions of the state have benefited from this program. It has reduced hundreds of tons of pollution.

It is oversubscribed by more than two to one. The program's success was a model for other states. We should continue this program at the same levels of \$20 million over two years

from the Congestion, Mitigation, and Air Quality fund. Funding DERG from CMAQ will not impact the state's budget because they are federal funds.

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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.