



For Immediate Release
May 18, 2011

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

One-Two Punch for Clean Air; State and Federal Law Makers have Opportunity to Improve Air Quality

Clean air group and daycare call for clean air measures to protect children

Columbus, OH –The Ohio Environmental Council is calling on state and federal lawmakers to give a one-two punch to dirty diesel engines. The Ohio State Senate and Governor Kasich should throw the first punch against old, dirty, diesel engines by keeping funding of the Diesel Emission Reduction Grant (DERG) program at \$20 million (put in by the House) over a two year period. The OEC is calling on U.S. Senator Rob Portman to throw the second punch against dirty diesel by co-sponsoring clean construction provisions and supporting the Diesel Emission Reduction Act (DERA).

“The Diesel Emission Reduction Grant program at the state level, clean construction provisions as well as DERA at the federal level will get deep cuts in pollution,” states David R. Celebrezze, Director of Air and Water Special Projects at the Ohio Environmental Council. “This is not a partisan issue, but a common sense issue-the technology exists to severely blunt pollution from diesel vehicles; it is our responsibility to take action.”

Children are highly susceptible to harmful air pollution from diesel and gasoline vehicles. They breathe 50% more air per pound of body weight than adults.

“It is not unusual on air quality alert days to get calls from parents requesting that their child have limited, to no, time outside,” states Sarah Delay, owner of Little Dreamers, Big Believers Daycare. “Here at Little Dreamers, Big Believers we strive for a healthy environment for the children. Clean air is an extension of that belief.”

To date the state DERG program has reduced more than 100 tons of nitrogen oxide (a key ingredient in ground-level ozone pollution) and 9 tons of particulate matter. Historically, federal funds from the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement program have been used to fund the program. The House’s version of the budget bill continues this funding source and level.

Clean construction provisions at the federal level can greatly reduce pollution from the construction sector-a major source of diesel pollution. According to the U.S. EPA the construction sector makes up 21% of the diesel particulate matter 2.5 emissions-the second highest of any sector. Clean construction provisions would require diesel engines to install technology to reduce emissions by 85% or the maximum achievable reductions.

“Clean construction provisions is the next step in battling harmful diesel pollution.” States Celebrezze. “The days of seeing that black plume on that wheel loader are numbered if clean construction provisions pass. 1% of the total project cost should go to cleaning up the fleet. We call on Senator Portman to do the right thing and co-sponsor the Clean Construction of 2011.”

The Diesel Emission Reduction Act; started by then Senator George Voinovich in 2005 has cleaned up thousands of diesel vehicles. But according to the U.S. EPA millions still remain on the road.

“The Diesel Emission Reduction Act has benefited central Ohio tremendously. We know the technology works to reduce pollution, sustain jobs, and improve the environment.” States Celebrezze.

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 Franklin County is 223 times greater than the U.S. EPA’s acceptable cancer level of 1 in a million. In Ohio, \$3.6 billion in additional health care costs is associated with diesel soot. The U.S. EPA estimates that for every dollar invested in DERA, \$20 is realized in health benefits. Clean air groups are asking the program to be funded at 2008 levels of \$50 million a year.

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.

Cleaning up old, dirty diesel engines will contribute to Ohio meeting air quality standards for PM 2.5 and upcoming new ozone and standards. Failure to meet the standards puts Ohio at an economic disadvantage, and compliance measures would be forced on the state.

“We know diesel pollution kills. We also know technology exists to prevent harmful pollutants from fouling our air and lungs,” states Celebrezze. “We are optimistic that state lawmakers and federal lawmakers will do the right thing. These two programs and the Clean Construction Act will go a long way in knocking out old, dirty diesels engines. This is good for business, the environment, and our health.”

-end-

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.