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Local school district invests in “green” school buses

State-wide eco-group teams up with Northwest Local Schools on diesel clean-up project-grant award of nearly \$50,000

Canal Fulton, OH – Northwest Local Schools are installing pollution control devices that are the most cost effective means to reduce diesel pollution from school buses. These modern pollution controls will reduce students’ exposure to harmful diesel pollution by up to 90%.

Northwest Local Schools teamed up with the Ohio Environmental Council, to secure a \$49,999 grant from the Ohio EPA to retrofit their buses with modern pollution controls.

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 Stark County include hundreds of asthma attacks and thousands of lost work days each year. In fact, the lifetime cancer risk from diesel soot in Stark County is 298 times greater than the U.S. EPA’s acceptable cancer level of 1 in a million.

“Clearly diesel pollution is chock-full of harmful matter,” said David R. Celebrezze, Director of Air & Water Special Projects for the Ohio Environmental Council. “Children riding on an old, unretrofitted bus are being adversely impacted by diesel fumes. We are proud to help Northwest Local Schools in cleaning up their buses.”

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.

Northwest Local Schools has taken action to reduce harmful diesel emissions and the state of Ohio can do its part. Other sources of diesel emission include construction equipment. Twenty-one percent of all diesel particle pollution in the state is from construction equipment. The state should require all public works projects sized \$2 million and larger to reduce their emissions by at least 20% now and 85% in 2013. “Green contract language can go along way in meeting air quality standards,” said Celebrezze. “Public dollars should not be spent on polluting.”

One of the pollution controls being installed on the buses is a diesel particulate filter, or DPF—a ceramic device that collects the particulate matter in the exhaust stream. The high temperature of the exhaust heats the ceramic structure, causing the trapped particles to break down (or oxidize) into less harmful components. DPFs achieve significant reductions in the amount of particulate matter, hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide, and ultrafine particles reduced into the air. In general, the DPF can cut diesel soot emissions by as much as 90%. DPFs last 7 to 15 years.

Another pollution control is the closed crankcase filtration system (CCFS), which reroutes emissions created by the combustion process of engines. A study by the Clean Air Task Force estimates that as much as 25% of school bus emissions originate in the crankcase. CCFS eliminate up to 90% of these emissions and last up to five years.

The Stark Community Foundation and the Herbert W. Hoover Foundation fund OEC's Stark County Diesel School Bus Clean-Up project.

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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.