



[UNLEASHING THE POWER OF GREEN]

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, November 4, 2008

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Halloween is over, but particle pollution remains scary and dangerous to Ohioans' health

Air quality plummets; sensitive groups must limit outdoor activity

COLUMBUS, OHIO – Local air officials have issued an air quality alert for central Ohio for particle pollution. This alert is in effect for the 4th and the 5th. The Air Quality Index (AQI) is projected to reach 113 on the 4th and 118 on the 5th for particle pollution. These levels are designated as “Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups” including those with respiratory ailments, active adults, children, and the elderly. This is the first time that an air quality alert has been issued in November since MORPC began forecasting air quality alerts which began in 2003. Counties affected: Delaware, Fairfield, Franklin, Knox, Madison and Licking.

“This is troubling” states David R. Celebrezze, Director of Air & Water Special Projects at OEC, “Halloween may be over, but these numbers are truly scary. We need to do more.”

Particle pollution comes from diesel powered engines, power plants, foundries and other sources. The particulate matter is 2.5 (PM 2.5) micrometers in diameter-the width of the human hair is about 30 times larger. Medical researchers have linked PM 2.5 to asthma attacks, painful breathing, cancer, and preventable deaths. Children on school buses are especially vulnerable as they breathe 50% more air per pound of body weight than adults. A study by the Clean Air Task Force estimates that in central Ohio, 84 deaths and over 2,000 asthma attacks a year are attributed to diesel exhaust exposure.

Government has a role in reducing these levels. Grant programs and policies that set an example can lead the way to cleaner air.

“The Strickland Administration can do right by setting an example for cities and private fleets by signing an executive order implementing a no idle policy for the state’s fleets. But this is not enough. The Administration should adopt green contract language for public works projects that require diesel emission reductions by up to 90%. The state can also fund the Diesel Emission Reduction Grant Program for \$15 million for the next two years,” says Celebrezze.

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The Ohio Environmental Council’s mission is to secure healthy air, land, and water for all who call Ohio home. www.theoec.org