



Connecticut Alliance Against Diesel Pollution

Working to significantly reduce the health risks from diesel pollution in Connecticut

Environment Northeast

Clean Water Action

Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice

Connecticut Fund for the Environment

News Release

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CONTACT: Alice Liddell, Environment Northeast 203-495-8224
Sarah Uhl and Roger Smith, Clean Water Action, 860-232-6232

Final Budget Includes Major Victory for Children's Health: \$10 Million to Enable Installation of Pollution Controls on All School Buses

Hartford, CT— The Connecticut Alliance Against Diesel Pollution (CAADP) applauds the legislature for including \$10 million dollars in the recently passed two-year budget to fund the retrofit of all full-sized school buses in the state with pollution control devices by September 1, 2010.

CAADP is a growing coalition lead by Environment Northeast and Clean Water Action with support from Connecticut Fund for the Environment and the Connecticut Coalition For Environment Justice.

Alice Liddell, Policy Analyst at Environment Northeast stated "We are pleased that the legislature has appropriated funding to clean up Connecticut's school buses. It's a win-win situation: reducing diesel emissions on all school buses will improve children's health on their ride to and from school and will help the state achieve its Climate Change Action Plan goals."

While school bus transport remains the safest way for kids to get to and from school, recent studies have shown that exhaust leaks from the engine into the passenger compartment on a conventional diesel school bus can elevate the level of diesel particles in-the cabin up to 10 times higher than outside air. This build up of diesel exhaust in a school bus puts children at risk of asthma attacks, permanent lung damage, and other cardiovascular and respiratory problems associated with the toxic and irritating fine particles of diesel. Children are especially vulnerable because their immature lungs are more susceptible to diesel pollution than adult lungs. Retrofitting a school bus can reduce emissions significantly.

In the next two-year budget period, the legislature has committed \$10 million dollars to purchase and install pollution control devices on the approximately 3,400 school buses in the state that are suitable for retrofitting. Representative Denise Merrill, co-chair of the Legislature's Appropriations Committee, should be commended for her work to secure this funding. Representative Merrill said "I am very pleased that during the budget negotiations we were able to retain the \$10 million dollars needed to retrofit the state's school buses in order to protect our children from harmful diesel emissions."

The devices will prevent emissions from entering the passenger compartment and will also reduce tailpipe emissions by up to 85%. The money in the two-year budget will fully fund the program so that municipalities and school districts will not be burdened with the cost.

Senate President Pro Tempore Donald E. Williams, Jr., Sen. Bill Finch, co-chair of the Legislature's Environment Committee, Representative Denise Merrill, co-chair of the Legislature's Appropriations Committee and others have championed Senate Bill 1032, An Act Reducing Diesel Emissions in School Bus Cabins this year and it has broad bi-partisan support having passed unanimously out of the following committees: Environment, Education, Government Administration and Election, Transportation, Appropriations, and Planning and Development.

"We always do everything we can to protect the health and welfare of our children," said Senate President Don Williams. "It only makes sense that we make the investment to be sure they are free as possible from exposure to this harmful pollution."

Under federal law, as of 2007 all new buses built must be equipped by the manufacturer with pollution control devices able to reduce tailpipe emissions by at least 85% compared to uncontrolled buses and that prevent diesel fumes from entering the cabin of the bus where children are exposed. "Since the vast majority of school buses in CT are older than 2007, without these retrofit devices school buses would continue to pollute and endanger school children for years to come," said Sarah Uhl, Diesel Consultant for Clean Water Action.

The CT Alliance Against Diesel Pollution, a growing coalition coordinated by Environment Northeast and Clean Water Action, and also led by Connecticut Fund for the Environment and the Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice, is working to take action at the state level. The goal is to reduce harmful diesel emissions from priority fleets including school buses, transit buses and state construction equipment which place children at risk of serious health disorders and are concentrated in highly polluted urban areas.

CAADP Steering Committee: Environment Northeast, Clean Water Action, Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice, Connecticut Fund for the Environment. Endorsing Organizations: Bridgeport East End Community Council, Canton Advocates for Responsible Expansion, Center for Serenity, Citizens Awareness Network, Collaborative Center for Justice, Common Ground High School Environmental Justice Class, Connecticut Citizen Action Group, Connecticut Coalition Against Millstone, Environmental Defense, Farmington River Watershed Association, Health Care for All, League of Women Voters, Middlesex Clean Air Association, Milford Environmental Concerns Coalition, People's Action for Clean Energy, Portland-River Valley Garden Club, Northeast Sustainable Energy Association, SCSU, Environmental Futurists, Sierra Club Connecticut Chapter, SEIU Connecticut State Council, Stamford South End Neighborhood Revitalization Zone, Sustainable Living Committee, Toxics Action Center, Unitarian Universalist Society

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