

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Date: April 20, 2005

“STOP SCHOOL BUS IDLING” DAY

Approximately 24 million children nationwide ride a bus to and from school everyday. Diesel exhaust from idling school buses can accumulate on and around buses and pose a health risk, particularly to children. When buses idle in the school yard, the exhaust can also pollute the air inside the school building. Numerous scientific studies indicate that repeated exposure to diesel exhaust can cause lung damage, respiratory problems, premature deaths, and lung cancer.

In order to address this issue, RAPCA is working with Montgomery County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (MRDD) and Springfield City schools to promote a **“Stop School Bus Idling Day”** to stop unnecessary school bus idling at their schools on Friday April 22, 2005, and continue this policy from then on. According to U.S. EPA, manufacturers generally recommend 3-5 minutes for warm-up time. In fact, any idling over the recommended warm-up time may be damaging to the engine. There are also great economic incentives to reduce idling. A typical diesel vehicle burns between a half gallon and one gallon of diesel fuel for each hour it idles. For a large fleet that can add up to thousands of dollars each year.

In October 2003, RAPCA received a grant from U.S. EPA’s Clean School Bus USA Program to retro-fit MRDD and Springfield City school buses with diesel oxidation catalysts and promote anti-idling initiatives.

The goal of Clean School Bus USA is to reduce both children's exposure to diesel exhaust and the amount of air pollution created by diesel school buses in three ways:

- Encouraging policies and practices to eliminate unnecessary public school bus idling.
- Upgrading ("retrofitting") buses that will remain in the fleet with better emission control technologies and/or fueling them with cleaner fuels.
- Replacing the oldest buses in the fleet with new, less polluting buses.

Pollution from diesel vehicles has health implications for everyone. The Clean School Bus USA brings together partners from business, education, transportation, and public health organizations to work towards reducing pollution from public school buses making sure that school buses are a clean way for children to get to school.

To date, the program has funded the purchase and installation of DOC's on 40 MRDD school buses with plans to equip an additional 30 school buses with DOC's at Springfield City School in the coming weeks.

RAPCA will continue to pursue working relationships with other area school districts to promote the Clean School Bus USA program and anti-idling initiatives.

For information about RAPCA's program please visit <http://www.rapca.org/specialevents/schoolbus/dieselretro-fits.htm>.

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