

NEWS RELEASE

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RAPCA Issues Letter of Support to Senator Voinovich for Bill to Reduce Harmful Emissions from Diesel Engines

The Regional Air Pollution Control Agency (RAPCA) sent a letter of support to U.S. Senator George V. Voinovich (R-Ohio) for introducing bipartisan legislation to further reduce harmful emissions from existing diesel engines. The Diesel Emissions Reduction Act of 2005, which is cosponsored by Chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-OK), Sen. Thomas Carper (D-Delaware), Sen. Johnny Isakson (R-Georgia), Sen. Hillary Clinton (D-New York), Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-Texas) and Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-California), will distribute over \$1 billion over 5 years to establish voluntary national grant and loan programs for diesel emission reduction projects and programs that improve air quality and protect public health. The bill will help areas come into attainment for the new air quality standards. Developed with environmental, industry, and public officials, the legislation complements Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations now being implemented that address diesel fuel and new diesel engines.

Reducing diesel emissions is pivotal in our effort to clean the nation's air. On-road heavy duty diesel vehicles, such as transit buses and garbage trucks, and non-road diesel vehicles, such as construction equipment and tractors, account for roughly one-half of the nitrogen oxide and particulate matter emissions from mobile sources nationwide. These emissions contribute to ozone formation and fine particulate matter, and they contain numerous other chemicals that are listed by EPA as hazardous air pollutants.

Currently there are 38 Ohio counties, including Montgomery, Miami, Clark and Greene, that are in nonattainment for the new ozone and/or particulate matter air quality standards.

EPA has finalized diesel fuel and new engine regulations that will reduce diesel emissions from new diesel buses, freight trucks, and non-road equipment by more than 80 percent from 2000 levels. Unfortunately, the full benefits of EPA's rules will not be realized until 2030 because of the long lifetime of the 11 million existing engines. The durability of the diesel engines used to power school buses, trucks and railroads, agriculture processes, and emergency response vehicles can last for hundreds of thousands of miles over a lifetime of up to 30 years.

The Diesel Emissions Reduction Act of 2005 (DERA) establishes national and state-level grant and loan programs to promote the reduction of diesel emissions. The legislation:

- Authorizes \$1 billion over 5 years (\$200 million annually);
- Provides that 70 percent of the funds are distributed by EPA;
- Allocates 20 percent of funds to states to develop retrofit programs with an additional 10 percent available as an incentive for state's to match the federal dollars being provided;
- Establishes priority areas for projects – such as those that are more cost-effective and affect the most amount of people – and focuses the federal program on public fleets;
- Includes provisions to help develop new technologies, encourage more action through non-financial incentives, and require EPA to outreach to stakeholders and report on the success of the program.

DERA is based on the understanding that existing engines can benefit from technology that “retrofits” or replaces older engines. In doing so, cost-effective emissions reductions can be provided for these fleets and dramatically accelerate the public health benefits.

EPA estimates that this billion dollar program would leverage an additional \$500 million leading to a net benefit of almost \$20 billion with a reduction of about 70,000 tons of particulate matter. This is a 13 to 1 cost-benefit ratio.

"This bill will help areas reduce air toxics and meet health-based standards in a very effective manner," John Paul, Supervisor, RAPCA.

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