

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Brian Huxtable – RAPCA, 937.225.5931
Bruno Maier - RAPCA, 937.225.4795

Date: February 22, 2005

Today the Clean Air Task Force released a new report “*Diesel and Health in America*” which was researched and developed using EPA’s own scientific methodology. The report highlights the significant health risks associated with diesel emission exposure.

Diesels churn out a hazardous mix of gaseous and particle pollutants at ground level – where we breathe it – by trucks and buses around us in traffic, at school and transit bus stops, and by heavy construction or agricultural equipment.

Diesel exhaust contains numerous dangerous compounds, ranging from respiratory irritants to carcinogens including a host of air toxics, particulate matter, carbon monoxide and nitrogen oxides.

Particles from mobile diesel sources may be particularly unhealthy. These particles adsorb other metals and toxic gases produced by diesel engines – such as cancer causing-PAH (polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons) – onto their surfaces making them even more dangerous.

Diesel emissions pose the following health risks:

- Fine particle pollution from diesels shortens the lives of nearly 21,000 people each year. This includes almost 3,000 early deaths from lung cancer.
- Tens of thousands of Americans suffer each year from asthma attacks (over 400,000), heart attacks (27,000), and respiratory problems associated with fine particles from diesel vehicles. These illnesses result in thousands of emergency room visits, hospitalizations, and lost work days. Together with the toll of premature deaths, the health damages from diesel fine particles will total \$139 billion in 2010.

- Nationally, diesel exhaust poses a cancer risk that is 7.5 times higher than the **combined** total cancer risk from all other air toxics.
- In the U.S., the average lifetime nationwide cancer risk due to diesel exhaust is over 350 times greater than the level U.S. EPA considers to be “acceptable” (i.e., one cancer per million persons over 70 years).
- People who live in metropolitan areas with a high concentration of diesel vehicles and traffic feel their impacts most acutely. The risk of lung cancer from diesel exhaust for people living in urban areas is three times that for those living in rural areas.

Today in the U.S. there are more than 13 million diesel vehicles. More than three quarters of all Americans live near intersections, bus stops, highways, bus and truck depots, or construction sites with heavy equipment.

The I-70/75 corridor through the Miami Valley has one of the highest diesel truck traffic counts in the US interstate system. Dayton/Springfield has been ranked among the top 35 metropolitan areas in the US for health risk from diesel exhaust.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has issued important regulations that will require dramatic reductions in emissions from new diesel vehicles - starting in 2007 - but only the new ones. These regulations, to be phased in over the next quarter century, apply only to **new** engines.

The life span of the average diesel vehicle is nearly 30 years. Many diesels are driven over a million miles. We will be left with the legacy of pollution from dirty diesel vehicles for decades to come.

We do not need to wait. Technology is available today that can reduce particulate matter emissions. Now is the time to clean up our old trucks, buses, and heavy equipment to provide a cleaner future.

RAPCA recommends a number of options for reducing diesel exhaust including:

- Retrofitting older diesel vehicles by replacing mufflers with an optimal mix of filters or oxidation catalysts depending on vehicle age and type;

RAPCA coordinated with the Montgomery County Board of Mental Retardation (MRDD) and the City of Springfield school districts to retrofit 70 school buses with diesel oxidation catalysts. RAPCA received a \$63,000 grant from USEPA to conduct these retrofits as a demonstration project in 2004. We have contacted all school districts within our six counties jurisdiction to voluntarily move forward with diesel retrofits.

- Requiring Ultra Low Sulfur Diesel and cleaner alternative fuels

Low sulfur diesel fuel will be available in the Miami Valley beginning in 2006. We have been working with USEPA to try and bring ULSD into the I-75 corridor at an earlier date.

- Truck stop electrification programs to give long-haul truckers a way to power their rigs overnight without running their engines;

RAPCA is working with MVRPC to bring a truck stop electrification project into the Miami Valley. We hope to incorporate this as part of our revised SIP for ozone and particulate matter.

- Contract specifications requiring cleanup of trucks and construction equipment used in public works projects.

RAPCA will be working with local municipalities and school districts to encourage the use of environmental friendly contract specifications in public works projects. We will also be collaborating with MVRPC to encourage the use of these specifications in all transportation projects.

- Adopt diesel cleanup measures as federally-enforceable requirements in State Implementation Plans (SIPs) for the attainment of the fine particle and ozone air quality standards;

RAPCA is working with MVRPC to bring a truck stop electrification project into the Miami Valley. We hope to incorporate this as part of our revised SIP for ozone and particulate matter. We will also be collaborating with MVRPC to encourage the use of these specifications in all transportation projects and hope to have this type of innovative approach become part of the upcoming SIP revision.

- Adopt and enforce anti-idling ordinances and legislation.

RAPCA coordinated with area school districts to hold an anti-idling day on October 16. A number of local school districts has incorporated anti-idling in their standard operating procedures.

RAPCA supports the findings of the Clear Air Task Force's report and agrees that exposure to diesel emissions poses significant public health risks. RAPCA is dedicated to bringing the aforementioned options, to reduce diesel emissions, to fruition.

For more information about RAPCA's retrofit project, please visit RAPCA's website at www.rapca.org and to view the Clean Air Task Force's report, please visit their website at www.catf.us/.

###