

Illinois Campaign to Clean Up Diesel Pollution

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

A Joint Project of the Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago and Citizen Action Illinois

Spring 2007

Dear Illinois Organization:

In the United States, more than 13 million vehicles use diesel fuel to build our nation's buildings and roads and to transport goods and people. However, the fine particle pollution from diesel emissions shortens the lives of an estimated 21,000 people nationwide every year, and the cancer risk from diesel exhaust is 8 times higher than the cancer risk from all other air toxins combined. The Illinois Campaign to Clean Up Diesel Pollution invites your organization to join the campaign to clean up the air we breathe by reducing diesel pollution. Diesel exhaust elements rank among the air pollutants that the Environmental Protection Agency believes pose the greatest health risks, in addition to contributing to global warming. Although these risks are highest in urban areas, diesel pollution is everywhere and affects all Illinois residents. Every year diesel particulate matter emissions ("soot") in Illinois is responsible for:

- **878 premature deaths,**
- **1,193 non-fatal heart attacks,**
- **19,162 asthma attacks,**
- **539 cases of chronic bronchitis,**
- **112,205 work-loss days, and**
- **649,445 minor restricted-activity days.**

The Illinois Campaign to Clean Up Diesel Pollution, a collaboration led by the Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago and Citizen Action Illinois, is committed to significantly reducing the health risks from diesel pollution in partnership with the National Partnership to Reduce Diesel Pollution. The National Partnership recommends guidelines for state plans to follow:

Improving Health

1. **Plans should be designed to minimize risk to public health.** Acknowledging that there is no known safe level for exposure to diesel pollution, diesel emissions reductions should go beyond attainment of state and federal ambient health standards for air quality, and deeper diesel pollution reductions should be pursued as technology improves.
2. **Plans should target reducing exposure to sensitive subpopulations,** especially the elderly, children, and environmental justice communities, where pollutant levels are highest and where the potential for human health benefits are greatest.
3. **Plans to reduce diesel pollution should target particulate matter, as its components have serious health and global warming impacts.** Particulate matter has been identified by public health and medical experts as the most dangerous component of diesel pollution. Targeting particulate matter will also reduce black carbon soot, a global warming pollutant, helping to reduce the serious economic, health, and environmental threats posed by global warming.

Reducing Pollution

4. **Plans should consider options to reduce diesel pollution from all sources.**
5. **Plans should utilize the best pollution controls and management practices to guarantee the greatest possible reduction in diesel emissions.** Strategies could include: retrofits, rebuilds, replacements, cleaner fuel, implementing and enforcing no-idling policies, encouraging stricter inspection and maintenance practices, and implementing commercial and industrial environmental management systems.

6. **Plans to reduce diesel particulate matter should not significantly increase other air pollutants.** Policies that create other pollution, including net increases in nitrogen oxides (NOx) or other air toxics, should be avoided.

Applications

7. **Plans should support engagement of all levels of government to pursue maximum diesel pollution reductions.**

8. Plans should require that, to the maximum extent feasible, each sector contributing to diesel pollution share in the expense and effort of reducing this pollution. **A diversity of funding sources, public and private, should be utilized to achieve maximum pollution reductions. Innovative funding and incentive strategies (for example: loans, tax credits, and small-scale grants) should be pursued to encourage private fleet participation.**

9. **Plans should ensure that adequate pollution monitors exist to create an accurate inventory and to provide on-going tracking of emissions.** Comprehensive diesel emission inventories of all sectors (on-road, off-road and stationary) are an essential tool for identifying opportunities and assessing progress.

Key Facts About Diesel Pollution

Diesel and Health

- **Diesel pollution makes people sick.** It contains lung irritants, more than 40 “air toxics” including carcinogens and fine particulate matter (PM). Tiny particles in diesel exhaust are inhaled deep in the lungs, where they can trigger asthma and heart attacks.
- **Nationally, diesel PM cuts short the lives of approximately 21,000 people per year** - more premature deaths than caused by homicide or drunk driving.
- **Illinois ranks 6th in the list of states that have the highest numbers of premature deaths from diesel exhaust.**
- **The Chicago Metropolitan Area ranks 3rd in the nationwide list of metropolitan areas with the gravest health impacts from diesel exhaust.**
- **School buses, trucks, construction and industrial equipment, locomotives and marine vessels are sources of diesel pollution.** Since sources are concentrated in urban areas, people who live and work in cities are exposed to higher levels of risk.
- **Diesel soot is a global warming pollutant.** Black carbon from diesel exhaust, pound for pound, is thought to have a warming effect at least 220 times more powerful than carbon dioxide.

Solutions for Illinois

- **Beginning in 2007, federal standards will require new diesel engines to be 90% cleaner than they are today.** But since these new standards only apply to new engines, diesels built to yesterday’s emission standards will be on Illinois’ roads and at Illinois’ job-sites for many years to come. **Unless we act now.**
- **Solutions are available today.** The same fuels and technologies that make 90% PM emission reductions possible from new engines are available for in-use engines as well.

- **We support immediate emissions reductions to the lowest level achievable in school buses, transit buses, and construction equipment used in public projects.** These priority fleets endanger our most sensitive populations: children, seniors, and urban residents. **There is no reason to delay.**
- **The Illinois legislature has shown its support for diesel emission reduction,** passing Public Act 094-0845 in Spring 2006, which aims to eliminate unnecessary idling of diesel vehicles, saving fuel and lives. Many school districts have adopted more strict anti-idling policies to protect children, one of the populations most vulnerable to diesel exposure.
- **With your help, Illinois can largely eliminate health risks from diesel vehicles** by retrofitting emission controls; switching to cleaner fuels; rebuilding or replacing older engines; eliminating unnecessary idling; improving the efficiency of freight and transportation systems; and building institutional support for diesel pollution prevention.