

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVE'S TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING ON  
SB-295 "DIESEL - POWERED COMMERCIAL MOTOR VEHICLE IDLING ACT"  
APRIL 10, 2008

Good Morning,

My name is Thomas Lattner. I am an Air Pollution Control Engineer with the Allegheny County Health Department Air Quality Program. I am here at the invitation of the Transportation Committee to speak on behalf of the Health Department regarding our regulations dealing with diesel powered vehicle idling.

The Allegheny County Health Department has two separate diesel idling regulations already on the books – one regulates idling of diesel powered school buses and the other regulates idling of diesel powered motor vehicles, for example diesel trucks and transit buses. These regulations have been in effect since October 2004 and June 2005, respectively. In addition, the Health Department's third idling regulation, the "Off-Road Diesel Powered Mobile Equipment Engine," aimed at reducing idling of diesel powered construction equipment, airport ground support equipment, industrial and other non-road equipment, has been approved by the Board of Health and only requires final approval by our County Council and executive branch before it becomes effective.

The ACHD began writing its diesel school bus idling regulations in late 2003, at a time when some 20 states and/or local governments already had diesel idling regulations. Our school bus idling regulation was developed by addressing some of the considerations for which other agencies, particularly those in Philadelphia and the state of California, had already established regulatory requirements, then, after extensive consultation with members of the environmental and school transportation communities, we adapted some of those requirements and added some of our own to meet the needs of Allegheny County.

Our next two idling regulations followed the same outline with modifications to fit the particular equipment being regulated.

All of our regulations have the same idling restriction, that is, idling is to be limited to five consecutive minutes, with exemptions granted by regulation. Those exemptions were crafted to balance the desire to limit idling with the need to protect the health and safety of the vehicle's operator and passengers, and not hinder the vehicle from carrying out its intended function. With the effort of stakeholders, we believe that we achieved this balance in Allegheny County's idling regulations and that these regulations are a good fit for our County's needs.

For example, our school bus idling regulation has an exemption that allows queuing at a school where the physical configuration of the school requires buses to line up for the sequential discharge or pickup of students. Many of our urban schools do not have the

space for buses to wait with their engines turned off while their buses discharge or pickup students, instead the school buses move up one at a time to the school entrance to drop off and pick up the children.

Our diesel motor vehicle idling regulation has an exemption that allows our transit agency to submit an alternative plan for minimizing idling during the morning startup at one of its terminals where many of its buses must be stored outdoors in cold weather.

In addition, our off-road diesel equipment engine idling regulation has an exemption that recognizes that construction vehicle operators sometimes spend extremely hot or cold days in the cab of a piece of equipment, while working in remote locations, and allows for idling the engine to provide relief in the form of heating or air conditioning.

The ACHD understands that there are many individual owner/operators of the diesel engines that are regulated or will be regulated under its idling regulations, and to that end has taken two approaches. First, the regulations themselves require that the owners/operators of school bus terminals and construction jobsites provide signage at the terminal or jobsite that describes the essentials of the idling regulations. Second, the ACHD has conducted several mass mailings to provide informational brochures to school bus owners and operators to increase awareness of the idling regulation. We have also enlisted the aid of Penn DOT in advertising the regulation on electronic message boards over our major parkways, and we are embarking on a \$10,000 radio advertising campaign to reach truck and transit bus operators.

With regard to enforcement, our idling regulations are written to allow enforcement by any municipal or local government unit having jurisdiction over the place in the County where idling occurs. Of course, our Health Department inspectors also enforce the regulations, and do so mainly on a complaint received basis. We average ten complaints per year. To date, we have issued six Notices of Violations, five against school bus drivers and one against a truck driver. We have had no repeat offenders. Our penalty structure calls for a warning for the first offense, a fine of \$100 for the second offense and fines of \$500 for the third offense and any subsequent offenses. We have not issued any fines yet.

Finally, in addition to reducing diesel emissions through idling regulations, the ACHD has encouraged and supported the retrofitting of diesel powered vehicles and equipment in Allegheny County. The Health Department has provided \$184,000 to retrofit 75 school buses in the Penn Hills School District, and organized a day long educational seminar for school districts to enhance their knowledge of the health effects of diesel exhaust pollution, the diesel idling regulation, and the different types of diesel retrofit equipment available to reduce diesel pollution. Currently, the ACHD has \$500,000 in grant money available to school districts in the County that desire to retrofit their school buses. The ACHD is also a supporter of the organizations working in the County and Southwestern Pennsylvania who are seeking federal funding for retrofit projects through the U.S. Department of Transportation's Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program. The ACHD recognizes that reducing pollution from diesel powered vehicles and

equipment is an importance objective, and we believe that our idling regulations and related retrofit efforts are helping to meet that objective in Allegheny County.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to the Committee today.