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April 4, 2008

The Honorable Joseph F. Markosek, Chairman  
House Transportation Committee  
Room 314 Irvis Office Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2025

Dear Chairman Markosek,

Chairman Markosek, Representative Geist, and members of the House Transportation Committee, thank you for the opportunity extended to the Pennsylvania Bus Association to provide input on the provisions of SB 295 which provides for idling restrictions on diesel-powered commercial vehicles.

Motor coaches continue to have a positive impact on the environment by taking approximately 40 cars off the road for each bus, and mitigating congestion as well as pollution. These vehicles are fuel-efficient delivering more than 146 passenger miles per gallon of fuel. Motor coaches, however, are very different than trucks and have to meet many Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration laws requiring the ability to idle including:

1. Pump up the motor coach air pressure systems to ensure brake performance as required by 49 CFR 393.52;
2. Utilize Americans with Disabilities Act mandated wheelchair lifts; and
3. Operate the heating or air conditioning system to warm up or cool down the interior of the motor coach for passenger safety, health, and comfort.

We believe that SB 295 addresses these requirements and are consistent with federal law.

The legislation also recognizes certain situations where idling is required such as when maintenance is being performed, during vehicle inspections, when forced to creep in traffic at the direction of traffic control persons, and when there are mechanical difficulties beyond the control of the driver.

In the effort to seek some clarification within SB 295, the motorcoach industry would like to be reassured that the individual referred to as "driver" in the Commercial Motor Vehicle definition section is the same as the "operator" individual referred to under Section 3 detailing "Restrictions on Idling". The bus owners are appreciative of the effort to notify them when a driver/operator is convicted of a violation of the idling laws.

As SB 295 proceeds through the legislative process, please feel free to contact me or Kim Sokoloski at Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney (717-237-4861) if additional questions or concerns arise that impacts the motorcoach industry.

Very truly yours,

*Elaine*

Elaine Farrell, CAE  
Executive Director