



CLEAN CONSTRUCTION: MOVING RHODE ISLAND FORWARD

Diesel Soot and Your Health

Diesel pollution is deadly. The black carbon soot released from a diesel engine is seven times more carcinogenic than all 133 air toxics tracked by EPA *combined*. Diesel soot, also called particulate matter; triggers asthma and heart attacks in addition to cancers, abnormal heart rhythms and retarded lung growth in children among other diseases.



Providence County ranks in the worst 6% of all US counties for health problems associated with diesel pollution. Rhode Island has the third highest rate of childhood asthma in the Northeast and the fifth highest nationally. Our state spends \$316 million providing health care for problems attributed to particulate matter every year.

As the workhorses of our economy, diesel engines, especially construction equipment, play a major role in building the infrastructure of our communities, transporting goods and people, and ultimately, propping up our economy. We need clean diesel solutions that will benefit the drivers, machine operators, pedestrians, and communities exposed to harmful levels of diesel soot.



EPA Takes Action

Recognizing diesel pollution as a threat to public health, EPA slashed emissions standards by 90% for all new diesel engines beginning in 2007. As a result, newer engines are 90% cleaner, but EPA left it up to states and cities to clean up the older dirtier diesels. These old diesel vehicles will be on our roads for decades to come unless we take action now.



Filters Are the Solution

Fortunately, solutions are available to clean up an aging diesel fleet. A diesel particulate filter (also known as a retrofit); combined with ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel (ULSD) eliminates over 90% of the harmful particulates from a diesel engine. Retrofits now



Clean Construction Benefits:

- » *Retrofits mitigate noise, odor and vibration; common nuisances for residents and businesses located near construction sites.*
- » *Air quality improves and healthcare costs fall. Missed days of work from respiratory problems — 5,500 days per year in RI— also decline.*
- » *Neighborhood relations and companies' public image improve significantly.*

come standard with the purchase of any new diesel vehicle, per EPA's regulation.

Concentrated In Construction

Construction vehicles and equipment are a major source of diesel pollution. Nationwide over two million pieces of construction equipment lack pollution controls. In the Northeast and Rhode Island, construction equipment accounts for 40% of all mobile source diesel pollution.

Because construction equipment is sturdy and reliable, it is typically in use for decades and has a slow

Government Responsibility

Public agencies exist to serve the community and thus have a responsibility to protect residents' quality of life. They also have the opportunity to be a standard-bearer for other sectors and can speed integration of the newest cleanest technologies to the mainstream market.

In the US, public agencies are responsible for 23% of all construction projects. Due to the magnitude of public-funded construction projects, changing their policies has great potential impact. Using clean diesel engines in transportation projects is a "win-win"

Sample Message

Public money shouldn't create a public health risk. Government funded construction projects should use clean diesel technology.

Cleaning up diesel vehicles will rebuild our economy with "green" jobs, reduce diesel emissions that threaten our health, and reduce global warming pollution.

I urge you to support a stronger policy to reduce diesel emissions in Rhode Island. Thank you, I look forward to your response.

TAKE ACTION:

Tell your government to commit to clean construction—for green jobs and our health.

- 1** Contact your State Legislators. Urge them to support legislation for clean diesel construction. Go to state.ri.us to find contact information. Use the sample message at left to get started.
- 2** Write a letter to the editor. Be sure to add the reasons why YOU care about diesel pollution.
- 3** Learn more about diesel clean-up and stay informed at cleanwateraction.org.

rate of fleet turnover. Thus, we must adopt a new way of doing business that utilizes modern pollution controls and accelerates the influx of new technology. A 21st Century investment in our nation's infrastructure needs to be a clean investment.

Black Carbon and Climate Change

Black carbon is the second greatest contributor to climate change after carbon dioxide. Because black carbon is dark and solid in form, rather than gaseous, it acts much like an asphalt surface, multiplying the heat it absorbs and radiating it back in to the atmosphere at a rate 2000 times more potent than CO₂. Fortunately retrofits provide a straightforward solution that can result in an immediate cooling effect.

Photos courtesy: Tim Caynes and Neo Kang.

proposition: rebuilding America with "green" jobs, reducing diesel emissions that threaten human health, and reducing global warming pollution.

For more information, please contact:

Nicole Poepping, Campaign Organizer
npoepping@cleanwater.org

741 Westminster Street | Providence, RI 02903
401.331.6972 phone | 401.331.7072 fax
www.cleanwateraction.org/ri