
# Senate Approves Measure to Reduce Harmful Emissions from Existing Diesel Engines

June 21, 2005

**Washington, DC** – The U.S. Senate today approved a measure sponsored by Senator Senator George Voinovich (R-OH) and a bipartisan group of senators including Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) that would reduce harmful emissions from existing diesel engines.

The *Diesel Emissions Reduction Act of 2005* is also cosponsored by Senators Thomas Carper (D-Delaware), Johnny Isakson (R-Georgia), Hillary Clinton (D-New York) and Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-Texas). It will authorize over $1 billion over 5 years to establish voluntary national grant and loan programs for diesel emission reduction projects and programs that improve air quality and protect public health.

The bill will help areas come into attainment for the new air quality standards. Developed with environmental, industry, and public officials, the legislation complements Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations now being implemented that address diesel fuel and new diesel engines.

**"This legislation will help clean California's air,"** Senator Feinstein said. **"It authorizes a billion dollars over five years to help take diesel engines off the road and out of our communities and replace them with cleaner engines. This means better air quality in the Central Valley, Los Angeles, and across the state."** Senator Feinstein said.

Reducing diesel emissions is pivotal in our effort to clean the nation's air. On-road heavy duty diesel vehicles, such as transit buses and garbage trucks, and non-road diesel vehicles, such as construction equipment and tractors, account for roughly one-half of the nitrogen oxide and particulate matter emissions from mobile sources nationwide. These emissions contribute to ozone formation and fine particulate matter, and they contain numerous other chemicals that are listed by EPA as hazardous air pollutants.

EPA has finalized diesel fuel and new engine regulations that will reduce diesel emissions from new diesel buses, freight trucks, and non-road equipment by more than 80 percent from 2000 levels. Unfortunately, the full benefits of EPA's rules will not be realized until 2030 because of the long lifetime of the 11 million existing engines. The durability of the diesel engines used to power school buses, trucks and railroads, agriculture processes, and emergency response vehicles can last for hundreds of thousands of miles over a lifetime of up to 30 years.

In the meantime, EPA has designated 495 counties nationally as in nonattainment for the new ozone and/or particulate matter air quality standards. Currently, state and local governments are hard at work developing plans to meet the new, fast approaching deadlines for the air quality standards – but without federal assistance, many will fall short.

In order to help states and communities meet these standards and reduce exposure to harmful diesel emissions, a voluntary diesel retrofit initiative is needed to substantially reduce emissions from our aging diesel fleets. The *Diesel Emissions Reduction Act of 2005 (DERA)* establishes national and state-level grant and loan programs to promote the reduction of diesel emissions. The legislation:

- Authorizes $1 billion over 5 years ($200 million annually);
- Provides that 70 percent of the funds are distributed by EPA;
- Allocates 20 percent of funds to states to develop retrofit programs with an additional 10 percent available as an incentive for state's to match the federal dollars being provided;
- Establishes priority areas for projects – such as those that are more cost-effective and affect the most amount of people – and focuses the federal program on public fleets; and
- Includes provisions to help develop new technologies, encourage more action through non-financial incentives, and require EPA to outreach to stakeholders and report on the success of the program.

DERA is based on the understanding that existing engines can benefit from technology that "retrofits" or replaces older engines. In doing so, cost-effective emissions reductions can be provided for these fleets and dramatically accelerate the public health benefits.

In the near future, states must develop State Implementation Plans (SIPs) to achieve ozone and particulate matter reductions to meet the new air quality standards. This legislation gives states and communities the opportunity and flexibility to design programs to fit their own needs. This legislation will help bring counties into attainment by encouraging the retrofitting or replacement of diesel engines, which will substantially reduce diesel emissions that contribute significantly to ozone and particulate matter.

EPA estimates that this billion dollar program would leverage an additional $500 million leading to a net benefit of almost $20 billion with a reduction of about 70,000 tons of particulate matter. This is a 13 to 1 cost-benefit ratio.

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