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December 20, 2016

Special notice about EPA grant funding – your action is needed!

Ohio EPA is in the early stages of developing a plan to use Ohio's portion of the Volkswagen consent decree/settlement. The state's share of the settlement dollars is anticipated to be \$71.4 million over 10 years. This money will be directed toward grants for projects that produce air quality benefits by reducing emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx), reducing public exposure to the pollutants in diesel exhaust; and promoting clean vehicle technologies.

The consent decree creates the following 10 eligible categories of actions:

- Class 8 local freight trucks and port drayage trucks
- Class 4-8 school buses, shuttle buses or transit buses
- Class 4-7 local freight trucks
- Pre-Tier 4 diesel switcher locomotives
- Repower or upgrade of eligible diesel-powered ferries and tugs
- Shorepower equipment for oceangoing vessels and vessels operating within the Great Lakes
- Repower of eligible diesel-powered airport ground support equipment
- Repower of eligible forklifts and port cargo handling equipment
- Light duty zero emission vehicle supply equipment
- Matching funds for Ohio EPA's state allocation of funding under the Diesel Emission Reduction Act (DERA).

Ohio EPA is seeking public comments on the relative percentages of available funds to be allocated to each category.

Please consider directing a communication to Ohio EPA urging them to allocate a significant percentage of the funding to the replacement of school buses. Other industries on the list above have already organized communication campaigns to the Ohio EPA asking for the money to be sent to them – we need to speak up and ask for a sizable portion of this grant money to be prioritized to replace our school buses.

The time frame is very short – initial comments have been requested by the end of 2016 (although we have been assured that comments received later will still be accepted and reviewed.)

If you want to read more about this program, please turn to www.epa.ohio.gov/OEE. Scroll down below the graphic and select the tab in the gray box titled VW Mitigation Grants. If you read this to its conclusion, you will also note that EPA has proposed target counties for eligibility. If you believe that all counties should be considered for this grant program, you should communicate that to Ohio EPA.

Please take action today. Send an email to DERG@epa.ohio.gov and ask for grant funding to be specifically allocated for school bus replacement. Without this request, we may still be able to access the grant funding but will have to compete with many other businesses and industry.

You might consider including the following facts:

- Over 800,000 of Ohio's children ride daily in Ohio's school buses.
- The majority of the more than 20,000 school buses in Ohio's school bus fleet are older models with diesel engines that lack today's clean power technology.
- Ohio school transportation vehicles travel over 1,000,000 miles each day, and provide more passenger trips than any other mode of passenger transportation in the state.
- The passengers in school buses are children – and should have the benefit of riding in newer clean technology powered vehicles for their health and safety.
- Ohio schools do not have any other fiscal resources to be used to accelerate their vehicle replacement program. Schools are prohibited by law from charging for their transportation service, and cannot generate revenue to assist with school bus replacement.

Thank you for taking a few moments to send an email and make a request on behalf of your school.

OSBA will continue to work closely with EPA and represent our member's needs and bring you new information as it develops.