



**ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE FUND**

finding the ways that work

**John Balbus  
Chief Health Scientist  
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Good morning/afternoon.

My name is John Balbus. I am a physician and the chief health scientist for Environmental Defense Fund, a national environmental non-profit organization with three offices and 100,000 members in California. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today.

Environmental Defense Fund has made cleaning up diesel engines of all kinds a top priority for the past decade because they are one of the most significant sources of toxic air pollution. An estimated 21,000 deaths nationwide will be attributable to diesel emissions in the year 2010. The scientific literature is overflowing with studies documenting harm from diesel emissions to the lungs, the immune system, the heart and cardiovascular system, even the developing brain. Children are also especially susceptible. Behind those 21,000 deaths are many hundreds of thousands of lives affected by heart disease, asthma, and possibly loss of IQ.

I'd like to take an armchair bus tour with you all to demonstrate that what California is proposing to do is completely consistent and in-line with what state and local governments across the country are already doing to address this major public health threat.

In Massachusetts, where researchers first demonstrated that black carbon from diesel exhaust lowers the IQ's of exposed children, and an estimated 450 people die from diesel exposure annually, lawmakers have introduced bills in their state house and senate that would require retrofits on all state-owned, leased or contracted diesel equipment and all municipal waste trucks by 2011 and 2012 respectively.

In New York City, where diesel exhaust is responsible for roughly 90% of the total cancer risk from airborne toxics, local laws require the use of ultra low sulfur diesel and retrofits on all municipal construction projects. The World Trade Center site is a national model for requiring retrofits on construction equipment.

In Washington, DC, Congress passed the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act, or DERA, in 2005, which authorizes \$1 billion over five years for retrofits. While funding has lagged, this money is cleaning up diesel engines around the country.

Texas passed its emissions reduction plan bill in 2001. This has provided an average of \$130 million each fiscal year for retrofits, repowering and replacement of highly-polluting diesel engines.

And California broke new ground in 1999 with the Carl Moyer Program, which has provided hundreds of millions of dollars in grants to speed the replacement of highly-polluting diesel engines.

The reasons for this national movement are clear. Uncontrolled diesel emissions are probably the most highly toxic air pollutants spewed directly onto our streets in neighborhoods around the country. The technology to sharply reduce health risks from these pollutants is readily available and highly affordable, making diesel clean-up one of the most cost-effective means of protecting human health.

In passing this rule, California will not only be once more demonstrating its national leadership in air pollution control, it will also be showing its wisdom in staying at the head of a nationwide movement to protect our most vulnerable citizens and reduce health care costs by placing highly cost-effective controls on diesel engines.

Thank you.