



Houston-Galveston Area Council

March __, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

As you may know, the Houston-Galveston-Brazoria (HGB) region is currently classified as one of the regions with the worst air quality in the nation. Numerous pollutants can be found in elevated levels throughout the region. In general, air pollutants are known to result in negative economic impacts and adverse health effects.

A key source of emissions that contribute to our region's elevated pollution levels are diesel vehicles. Air pollution from diesel vehicles has health implications for everyone, but children may be especially susceptible because they breathe more air relative to their body weight and their respiratory systems are still developing. Exposure to diesel exhaust can aggravate asthma, allergies, and respiratory problems. Some studies suggest that long-term exposure increases the risk of lung cancer.

The emissions from the operation of diesel school buses are of particular concern due to the precious cargo they carry - growing children. To address this concern, the state legislature has enacted the Texas Clean School Bus Program, which is being implemented by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ, see www.texascleanschoolbus.org)

One of the strategies the TCEQ recommends school districts consider is adoption of a bus idling reduction policy. An average school bus uses one-half gallon of diesel fuel for each hour of idling. Reducing idling by 30 minutes per day would save approximately 45 gallons and over \$112.00 per bus per year, freeing up scarce school district funds for other uses.

The Board of Directors of the Houston-Galveston Area Council encourages you to consider adopting the accompanying model resolution and policy to establish a school bus idle reduction policy.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

B. J. Gaines, Jr.
Walker County Commissioner
Chair, H-GAC Board of Directors