



December 3, 2008

Mary Nichols, Chairwoman, CARB
Members of the Air Resources Board
1001 "I" Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Ms. Nichols and Members of the Board:

As health and medical organizations of the Health Network for Clean Air, we write this letter to express our strong concern about the negative health impacts of diesel pollution from on-road trucks and buses. Our health professionals are on the front lines dealing with the direct effects of air pollution in daily interactions with the affected public and patients in hospital and emergency rooms. We therefore urge the California Air Resources Board to adopt the strongest regulation possible to clean up one of the top sources of diesel particulate matter in the state.

As you are well aware, trucks and busses statewide are the number one source of diesel emissions most responsible for health impacts, contributing almost 40% of diesel PM, as well as 50% of NOX, emitted from mobile sources. These emissions result annually in an estimated 4,500 premature deaths, 71,000 cases of asthma and lower respiratory symptoms, and 620 hospitalizations for heart disease, in addition to other serious health conditions that add up to \$40 billion in costs from loss of life, hospitalization and other health care costs. Equally important, truck drivers are 1.5 to 2 times more likely than workers not exposed to diesel exhaust to develop lung cancer during their lives.

Particulate matter can penetrate deeply into the lungs, causing or aggravating a variety of respiratory and cardiovascular illnesses, and can even lead to premature death. Smog forming pollutants such as NOX can damage the respiratory tract, aggravate chronic lung disease and exacerbate asthma. Over 4 million school absences occur every year due to respiratory conditions, including asthma related to pollution exposure. Additionally, recent studies link elevated particulate pollution to decreased lung growth and development in children. Exposure to the toxic air contaminants contained in diesel

exhaust can cause cancer, and has been linked to developmental harm to fetuses, and other serious health and reproductive problems.

Together these pollutants are taking a serious toll on California's public health, especially on the most vulnerable: children, whose lungs are still developing, and the elderly, whose immune systems are frail. These pollutants also take a serious toll on the state's economy. A recent study by economists at California State University, Fullerton found that air pollution in the San Joaquin Valley and South Coast costs the economy at least \$28 billion annually due to loss of life, hospitalizations for asthma attacks, cancer, and respiratory illnesses, along with missed work and school days.

Truck and bus pollution impacts everyone in California. Most of us live, work or go to school by a highway, transportation hub, or major road; indeed, 50% of all Californians live within 1 mile of a freeway. Many communities live in close proximity to major diesel pollution hot spots such as ports or truck distribution centers. To protect the health of all Californians, we urge the California Air Resources Board to develop a strong, effective and health-protective On-Road Heavy Duty Diesel Rule. Such a rule can reduce ozone and particulate pollution, benefit truckers' health, reduce greenhouse gases, lessen the impacts of toxic diesel pollution, and save lives.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Holmes-Gen, Senior Policy Director
American Lung Association of California

Myles Abbott, M.D., District Chair
American Academy of Pediatrics – CA

James K. Knox, Vice President, Legislative Advocacy
American Cancer Society - CA

Jamie Morgan, Senior Legislative Director
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