



## GROUP AGAINST SMOG & POLLUTION

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December 14, 2015

### **Testimony from Jamin Bogi, Policy and Outreach Coordinator of the Group Against Smog and Pollution, to the Pittsburgh Public School Board of Education on the need to require the use of less polluting buses**

Thank you for the opportunity to speak this evening. My name is Jamin Bogi and I'm the Policy and Outreach Coordinator of the Group Against Smog and Pollution (or GASP). For forty-seven years we've worked to improve air quality in southwestern Pennsylvania through education, advocacy, and legal work. One component of our region's air pollution is diesel emissions and one of the sources of those emissions is the school bus fleet.

Our request, and the request of those who signed these more than 200 signed postcards, is simple: do not utilize any school buses that don't have emission control devices on them. This means the bus must either be a 2007 or newer model that comes equipped with emissions controls from the factory or an older model that is retrofit with a diesel particulate filter.

Diesel particulate matter is the #1 air toxic cancer risk in the region. Diesel particles are also linked to asthma attacks, heart attacks, stroke, diabetes, and reduced brain function. Children are especially vulnerable, as they breathe at a faster rate than adults and are physically closer to diesel pollution sources. And since their bodies are still developing, damage now could impact their bodies and minds for years to come.

As you are in the process of negotiating new contracts with school bus companies, this is an optimal time for Pittsburgh Public Schools to make this demand of the companies who want to transport your students. As we approach 2016, it is perfectly reasonable to expect all school buses being used by the district to have pollution controls. These controls can reduce toxic diesel emissions by up to 90%. By using this technology, your students and staff, the community, and the drivers would be exposed to significantly less pollution.

In addition to requiring all school buses used by the District to have particulate filters, we also recommend that you include language in the contracts which requires the bus companies you work with to train their drivers on the PA diesel idling law. Additionally, these companies must know that Pittsburgh Public Schools takes the diesel idling law seriously and will not tolerate violations.

We hope you will sincerely consider this request as there is no good reason to continue to allow students to ride old, polluting school buses when a clean solution is so readily available.

Thank you for your time.