

Memorandum

Date: September 13, 2006
To: Rosemary Peterson, Director of School Nurses
From: Sustainable Belmont, a task force of Vision 21 Implementation Committee
Subject: Belmont's *Cleaning the Air Campaign*

Sustainable Belmont is requesting support from the school nurses for *Belmont's Cleaning the Air* campaign. As we discussed last week I'm providing you additional information about this campaign. The focus of the campaign is to make Belmont citizens aware and engage them in reducing air pollution from idling cars, buses and trucks, encouraging the use of clean diesel and creating a pedestrian friendly town. We are looking for assistance from all of the towns' leadership to support this campaign. We believe that school nurses play a crucial role in this effort since they are the ones who are on the frontlines of treating kids who may be exposed to the toxic fumes from auto exhaust and the fine particulates from diesel that can trigger asthma attacks in some children.

Background

Sustainable Belmont is a Task Force of the Vision 21 Implementation Committee. One of its initial activities was to develop a greenhouse gas emissions inventory for the public sector and to use that information, along with the information on greenhouse gas emissions from the municipal sector, to develop a *Climate Action Plan* on behalf of the Town of Belmont. Based on the work completed for that project, mobile sources, e.g., cars, trucks and buses, were identified as major sources of greenhouse gas emissions in Belmont. Mobile sources also contribute significant amounts of pollution that impact public health. For example, diesel exhaust contains fine particles that can penetrate deeply into the lungs and cause breathing difficulties, respiratory infections, and attacks of asthma and chronic bronchitis. Gasoline exhaust contains toxic carbon monoxide and a range of pollutants that contribute to smog and make breathing difficult for everyone

In April, 2006, based on efforts from members of Sustainable Belmont, the Town of Belmont was awarded a grant from Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to develop an anti-idling campaign. The grant provided \$1,500 toward road signs, fact sheets and decals for use throughout the Town. Sustainable Belmont has agreed to carry out the planning and implementation phases of this MA DEP grant.

Implementing the Cleaning the Air Campaign

In essence, the Cleaning the Air Campaign has three parts:

- working to make Belmont an *Idle Free Community*,
- encouraging the use of clean diesel, and
- making Belmont a pedestrian friendly town (including Safe Routes to Schools).

At this time, Sustainable Belmont is focusing on the implementation of the MA DEP Anti-Idling Program for the Belmont Public Schools and Parks by the beginning of the new school year or September, 2006. Future activities will include work with the various

bus companies and contracts and seek alternatives to driving. We've been very active and I've attached a listing of all the work we've done to date.

Next Steps

School nurses are in a unique position to provide support for this campaign. You not only understand the science about why idling can result in poor health in our community, but you are in a position to credibly communicate this information to students, parents, and staff at the schools.

I'm excited that you will be able to share this information with the Belmont School nurses to let them know about this campaign and why it's important. We would be happy to attend a meeting of school nurses if they have more questions or would like to know how the Campaign is progressing. Feel free to pass this information along to the custodians and cafeteria staff of the schools who receive deliveries, often by idling trucks.

Please contact us, either to arrange a meeting, or for a presentation, or just to discuss the information we're sending along. You can call or email either Deb Lockett or Jeri Weiss, our contact information is below. Thanks again for your time.

Cleaning the Air Campaign

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Jeri Weiss	goldman_weiss@hotmail.com	617-489-4119

Co-Chair of Sustainable Belmont

Jan Kruse	jankruse1@gmail.com
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Attachment 1

Chronology of events of Sustainable Belmont's *Cleaning the Air Campaign*

- In April, 2006, SB submitted an application to the MA Department of Environment a grant to begin an anti-idling program
- In June, 2006, the Town of Belmont was awarded \$1,500 toward an anti-idling campaign from the MA DEP
- In June, 2006, SB members attended a monthly meeting of Belmont's Department Heads to inform them of the MA DEP grant and the anti-idling campaign, answer questions and receive support. Contact is being made with each of the departments individually to provide deeper understanding of the program and gather ideas for additional support.
- In June, 2006, SB conducted observation research at each of the public schools to determine idling behaviors around the schools and parks.
- Also in June, 2006, SB members met with Dr. Holland, the Superintendent of Belmont Public Schools. Dr. Holland has endorsed the program and SB's plan and has offered to:
 - send a letter to parents at the beginning of the school year (September 2006) about the health issues surrounding idling and requesting drivers to consider alternatives to driving (this has been done)
 - include tips and reminders in the principals' monthly newsletters; and
 - remind school bus drivers of idling requirements and laws
- SB members have discussed the program with Sgt Hamilton who supports the plan and has agreed to:
 - prepare traffic officers regarding the issuance of warnings (first 9-months) and monetary ticketing thereafter
 - educate police officers of the facts and myths about idling so that they may be more prepared to speak about the issues and understanding of future enforcement of MA 5 minute idling law:
 - evaluate whether officers' cars must be running in order for on-board safety computers and equipment to run, e.g., leading by example, and
 - include enforcement of anti-idling laws within the Citizen Herald announcement section
- SB received support from the town Selectman and worked with Peter Castanino of the DPW to identify exact locations for thirty anti-idling signs to be hung in town at key locations, including schools and playing fields.
- The Selectmen, Dept. Heads, Vision 21 Implementation Committee, wrote a "Guest Perspective" that was published in the Belmont Citizen Herald supporting Belmont becoming an idle free town.
- SB has developed some outreach material to provide quick information about the problems with idling. Attached is a Fact Sheet with myths and facts about idling, as well as a copy of the MA Anti-idling law.
- SB is working with the town, is planning on submitting a grant to DEP to fund a part-time coordinator for the Cleaning the Air Campaign.

Attachment 2

Idling Myths and Facts for Cars

Fact: Idling Gets Us Nowhere

Myths	Facts
<p>The engine should be warmed up before driving.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Idling is not an effective way to warm up a vehicle. ◆ Driving is the best way to warm up an engine. ◆ An Engine will be sufficiently warm after 30 seconds, even on a winter day.
<p>Idling is good for your engine.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Engines are designed to drive, not idle. ◆ Excessive idling can damage engine components including cylinders, spark plugs, and the exhaust system. ◆ Your engine is not working at peak operating temperature when it's idling, so fuel does not go through complete combustion. ◆ Idling allows water to condense in the exhaust system causing corrosion and can reduce the life of the exhaust system.
<p>Shutting off and restarting is hard on your engine and uses more fuel.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ More than 10 seconds of idling uses more fuel than restarting the engine. ◆ Frequent restarting has little impact on engine components
<p>Idling for a few minutes doesn't matter.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Idling wastes fuel and money. Idling five minutes here and there through out the day can add up to more than a gallon of fuel wasted in a day. ◆ Burning gasoline contributes to climate change gases. Every gallon of gas produces about 20 pounds of carbon dioxide when combusted. ◆ Vehicle idling contributes to air pollution in the local and community level. ◆ If you're going to be parked for more than 10 seconds, turn off your engine
<p>I need to keep my car running to keep it warmed up in the winter.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Cars only need to about 30 seconds of idling on a cold day before driving. Today's modern engines warm up more quickly once a car is operating.
<p>Why do we idle?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Waiting for passengers ◆ In drive-through lanes at fast-food restaurants or banks ◆ Running quick errands ◆ Stopping to talk to an acquaintance or friend ◆ Preparing to leave the house ◆ Listening to the end of a song or story on the radio
<p>What should you do?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ TURN IT OFF. Turn off the engine if the vehicle is going to be parked for more than 10 seconds (except in traffic). ◆ DRIVE. Drive your vehicle to warm it up rather than idling (no more than 30 seconds is needed on winter days to circulate the oil through the engine). ◆ GET A TUNE UP. A poorly maintained car can release as much as 100 times the pollution of a well maintained car. ◆ TRIP CHAIN. Combine multiple trips into one outing. ◆ SPREAD THE WORD. Tell a friend about how to save money, reduce pollution, and not idle.

Do you want more information or have questions? sustainablebelmont@gmail.com.

Attachment 3

The Massachusetts Anti-Idling Law

Massachusetts General Law (MGL), Chapter 90, Section 16A,
310 Code of Massachusetts Regulation (CMR), Section 7.11 and
MGL, Chapter 111, Sections 142A – 142M

MGL, Chapter 90, 16A and 310 CMR, 7.11:

“No person shall cause, suffer, allow, or permit the unnecessary operation of the engine of a motor vehicle while said vehicle is stopped for a foreseeable period of time in excess of five minutes. 310 CMR 7.11 shall not apply to:

- Vehicles being serviced, provided that operation of the engine is essential to the proper repair thereof, or
- Vehicles engaged in the delivery or acceptance of goods, wares, or merchandise for which engine assisted power is necessary and substitute alternate means cannot be made available or,
- Vehicles engaged in an operation for which the engine power is necessary for an associated power need other than movement and substitute alternate power means cannot be made available provided that such operation does not cause or contribute to a condition of air pollution.”

Note: the regulation applies to all motor vehicles.

Penalties

Penalties can range from \$100(MGL Chapter 90, Section 16A) to as much as \$25,000 (MGL Chapter 111, Section 142A);
Drivers and/or companies can be held responsible for paying the fine;
Local police have the authority to enforce the law, as do health officials or other officials who hold enforcement authority.