



Environmental News

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EPA GIVES THE GREEN LIGHT ON DIESEL-SULFUR RULE

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EPA Administrator Christie Whitman today directed that EPA move forward on schedule with its rule to make heavy-duty trucks and buses run cleaner. These vehicles, which will be ready by model year 2007, will cut harmful pollution by 95 percent. Sulfur in diesel fuel must be lowered to enable modern pollution-control technology to be effective on these trucks and buses. The Agency will require a 97 percent reduction in the sulfur content of highway diesel fuel from its current level of 500 parts per million to 15 parts per million.

In announcing this decision, Administrator Whitman said, "The Bush Administration determined that this action not be delayed in order to protect public health and the environment. I look forward to working with state and local governments to meet their air quality goals as well as with citizens and businesses to ensure that diesel trucks and buses remain a viable and important part of the nation's economy."

Once this action is fully implemented, 2.6 million tons of smog-causing nitrogen oxide emissions will be reduced each year. Soot or particulate matter will be reduced by 110,000 tons a year. An estimated 8,300 premature deaths, 5,500 cases of chronic bronchitis and 17,600 cases of acute bronchitis in children will also be prevented annually. It is also estimated to help avoid more than 360,000 asthma attacks and 386,000 cases of respiratory symptoms in asthmatic children every year. In addition, 1.5 million lost work days, 7,100 hospital visits and 2,400 emergency room visits for asthma will be prevented.

Significant lead time is provided in the rule for the introduction of new cleaner fuel into the marketplace. Engine manufacturers will have flexibility to meet the new standards through a phase-in approach between 2007 and 2010. The fuel provision will go into effect in June 2006 and will be phased-in through 2009. The program also includes various flexible approaches, including additional time for some refiners and special provisions for small refiners. The final rule and related documents are available at: www.epa.gov/otaq/diesel.htm.