



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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OTC URGES EPA TO HOLD THE LINE ON EXISTING HIGHWAY DIESEL PROGRAMS, PUSHES FOR TIGHT NON-ROAD DIESEL STANDARDS

(August 6, 2002, Essex Junction, Vermont) -- At its annual meeting, the Ozone Transport Commission (OTC) urged the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to hold the line on its existing highway diesel emission control programs, and to move with speed in issuing strong non-road diesel engine and fuel standards. While EPA was recently successful in defending its highway diesel programs in Federal court, EPA has been under considerable pressure from industry groups to back down from the provisions of these programs.

"Against harsh criticism, EPA has held fast to address diesel issues. The OTC applauds these efforts, and is offering its full support to continue the current standards set forth to protect public health," said Arthur J. Rocque, Jr., current Chair of OTC and Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection.

OTC further noted that diesel smoke emissions from trucks and buses are noxious and hazardous to human health. The Clean Air Act Scientific Advisory Committee has determined that diesel exhaust is a likely human carcinogen at environmental levels of exposure. Emissions from diesel engines and fuels are a significant source of ozone pollution, regional haze, particulate matter pollution, greenhouse gases, and air toxics. Any delay or weakening of the diesel programs would result in an erosion of the public health protection that EPA is mandated to provide.

Between 1988-1998, seven U.S. engine manufacturers were found to be employing illegal defeat devices that frequently turned off emission controls on over one million new diesel engines. This has resulted in over 11 million tons of excess emissions of air pollution, to date. In June 2002, industry groups began pressuring the Administration and Congress to delay the October 1, 2002 compliance date of the consent decrees, and filed legal challenges in court. OTC is concerned about possible delays in implementing the consent decrees, and a possible weakening of their provisions.

"This is really a market share issue," explained Nicholas DiPasquale, incoming Chair of OTC and Secretary of the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control. "We know that two engine

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manufacturers have invested the resources to develop engines that comply with the upcoming standards. Those manufacturers that have not complied should suffer the penalties of not playing by the rules they themselves have agreed to."

OTC also urged EPA to proceed on course with stringent standards for off-highway diesel engines, which include construction, agricultural, and industrial equipment. "We've typically relied on EPA to set standards that adequately protect public health, and we hope the Agency will come through for us again," said Jan Reitsma, incoming Vice Chair of OTC and Director of the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management. "If the OTC States do not see stringent standards proposed very soon, we will have to assess what we can do as a region to bring about adequately protective standards for non-road diesel engines and fuels."

OTC is a multi-state organization whose main focus is to develop regional solutions to the ground-level ozone problem in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic region of the U.S. Created by Congress in 1990, OTC's members include: Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Virginia. Ground-level ozone, a key component of smog, forms during warm weather when pollution from vehicles, fuels, power plants, households, and industry bakes in the sun, making it difficult for many people to breathe.