



# SAFETY GRAM

## NEWS AND INFORMATION FROM THE SCHOOL BUS SAFETY EXPERTS

**Contact:** Robin Leeds, Executive Director

**Phone:** 860/953-2782

**Email:** leeds@costa.necoxmail.com

## STATEMENT

### Pilot Program to Reduce School Bus Emissions January 23, 2002

The Connecticut School Transportation Association is pleased to partner with the Department of Environmental Protection in this and other efforts to reduce school bus emissions. As an industry, we are committed to the health and safety of our passengers. Just as COSTA has always promoted improvements in driver training and school bus crash protection, we also support improvements in fuel sources and engine technology to reduce air pollution.

This pilot program will allow DEP and the industry to test clean diesel engines and low sulfur fuel in the practical environment of real school transportation. We commend First Student for their willingness to take on this project, and we recognize also the efforts of the Department of Motor Vehicles to ensure that all retrofitted systems are in keeping with the high safety standards we impose on all school buses.

If the program demonstrates, as we expect it will, that clean diesel engines and ultra-low sulfur fuel deliver safe, cost-effective performance along with significant environmental benefits, COSTA will encourage our members to move to this system as they replace their buses. The timing will depend to a large degree on the widespread availability of ultra-low sulfur fuel.

In the meantime, our members are taking other steps to effect immediate reductions in diesel emissions in order to promote cleaner air for both the students they transport and their own employees. We have launched a two-pronged campaign to eliminate unnecessary idling of school buses. We have asked all carriers to instruct drivers to turn off their engines as soon as they reach the school or other destination, and not to allow their buses to idle while waiting for students. This measure will reduce the level of diesel emissions at schools. We have also asked carriers to shorten the time that buses are allowed to run during the morning start-up to no longer than necessary to bring them to operating temperature and to defrost all windows. This measure will reduce the level of diesel emissions at and around school bus terminals.

These two initiatives will help clear the air for students and for all of us. The members of COSTA have always been leaders in transportation safety; we intend to be leaders in environmental responsibility as well.

**CONNECTICUT SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION ASSOCIATION**

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## Background Information

Number of students transported in Connecticut: about 400,000

Number of school buses in Connecticut: about 6,200

Percent of school buses that are diesel: about 98%

Number of school bus carriers in Connecticut: 27 school bus companies, 14 school districts that operate their own buses, 43 independent bus owners (one or two buses).

Percent of carriers that are COSTA members: 100%

Number of school districts in Connecticut: 166

Percent of school districts that contract their transportation: 92%

Average daily mileage for Connecticut school buses: about 100 miles

Average diesel fuel consumption: about 5-6 miles per gallon

Additional cost per gallon of ultra-low sulfur fuel: 15 cents now, estimated by EPA to be 5 cents in 2006.

Average cost of a full-size Connecticut school bus: \$52,000

Additional cost of clean diesel system: about \$6,000-\$7,000

EPA regulations timeline for conversion to clean diesel: emissions standards for engines take effect with the 2007 model year; diesel fuel must meet the 15 ppm sulfur content standard in 2006.

Bill in Congress to establish grant program for demonstration projects: HR 4, "Clean Green School Bus Act of 2001," part of the Energy Policy Act of 2002. Appropriates \$25,000,000 in 2002 for competitive grants to replace older school buses with alternative fuel or ultra-low diesel buses.

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