Dirty Diesel

The Problem:

Diesel exhaust is deadly. The soot and gases released from diesel tailpipes include a cocktail of 40 hazardous air pollutants. These include carcinogens and other air toxics that harm the brain, lungs and heart. Besides endangering human health, diesel engines emit black carbon, a potent global warming pollutant.

• Oregon is 6th in the nation for highest health risk from diesel pollution.
• 17 Oregon counties¹ have diesel pollution at levels that are considered harmful. In fact, Multnomah County ranks 4th in concentration of diesel exhaust among all counties in the U.S., higher than Los Angeles, the Bronx and Jersey City.
• 96% of Oregonians will have elevated cancer risk from diesel in their lifetime.

The Solution:

The owners and operators of diesel engines can responsibly protect our communities and clean our air by:
• Purchasing vehicles and equipment with new, cleaner engines
• Retrofitting older engines with pollution control equipment
• Burning cleaner fuels
• Burning less fuel by not idling and properly maintaining engines

The Oregon Legislature can ensure this happens by:
• Adopting California's diesel regulations, the most protective in the nation (HB 3310)
• Providing financial assistance to retrofit, rebuild or replace older diesel engines, and ensuring these "carrots" are utilized by following them with regulation (SB 824)
• Ensuring that construction equipment used in public works projects is cleaned up over time (SB 824)
• Tightening anti-idling regulations (SB 823)

Diesel emissions are at unhealthy levels in at least 17 Oregon counties:

Benton
Clackamas
Columbia
Coos
Deschutes
Hood River
Jackson
Josephine
Klamath
Lane
Linn
Marion
Multnomah
Polk
Wasco
Washington
Yamhill
Why Oregon Must Act Now

Improved federal regulations for new diesel engines require them to be cleaner. But older diesel engines can last for more than a million miles and can be rebuilt many times without pollution controls. **Unless we take action to ensure old engines are retrofit with pollution control equipment or—even better—replaced, it could be 30 years before today’s dirty engines are gone.**

It is more urgent than ever to address diesel pollution because Oregon has become the dumping ground for old diesel trucks and equipment from California.

Clean air is also important for Oregon’s economy to grow. Diesel exhaust contributes to health care costs and employee absenteeism. In addition, where communities have not met (or are in danger of not meeting) the federal Clean Air Act, industry cannot expand. For example, Klamath Falls, Oakridge and Eugene/Springfield have problems with particulate matter and are federally required to reduce emissions through a variety of strategies. If diesel pollution were reduced, those communities could put less pressure on industry.

### Health Effects of Diesel Exhaust

Diesel exhaust contains tiny sooty particles and more than 40 hazardous pollutants which can be inhaled deep into the lungs and absorbed into the blood stream. Children, and workers exposed to diesel at close range, are at highest risk of harm. Known and suspected health effects include:

- Cognitive impairment
- Heart attack
- Asthma attacks and more severe symptoms
- Male infertility
- Autism linked to maternal exposure
- Higher risk of stroke
- Exposure can worsen allergies
- Lung cancer
- Birth anomalies linked to maternal exposure
- Impaired lung growth in children

Diesel in Oregon causes as many as **468 premature deaths** and **$3.5 billion** in economic loss each year.

*Sources available at OECOnline.org*

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