

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 10, 2009

The Honorable James Oberstar
Chairman
Transportation & Infrastructure Committee
2165 Rayburn HOB

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
Chairman
Highways & Transit Subcommittee
2165 Rayburn HOB

The Honorable John Mica
Ranking Member
Transportation & Infrastructure Committee
2163 Rayburn HOB

The Honorable John Duncan
Ranking Member
Highways & Transit Subcommittee
2163 Rayburn HOB

Dear Chairmen Oberstar and DeFazio and Ranking Members Mica and Duncan:

As the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee continues deliberations on the Surface Transportation Authorization Act of 2009, we ask that you include a provision, along with the necessary funding, to require that diesel equipment used on federally funded transportation construction projects utilize modern pollution controls. A 21st Century investment in our nation's infrastructure needs to be a clean investment.

As the workhorse of our economy, diesel engines, especially construction equipment, will play a major role in building the next generation of infrastructure projects in our communities. However, according to the Environmental Protection Agency, more than 37 percent of land-based particulate matter comes from construction equipment. Nationwide, there are more than 2 million pieces of construction equipment and most lack modern particulate pollution controls.

Today, more than 88 million Americans live in counties that violate federal health standards for fine particulate pollution. Therefore it should come as no surprise that pollution from diesel construction equipment poses a health threat to the people across the country, communities large and small and project workers alike. Diesel pollution is associated with numerous adverse health effects including lung cancer, asthma attacks, heart attacks, stroke, and premature death. Heavy construction equipment


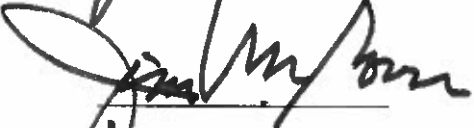
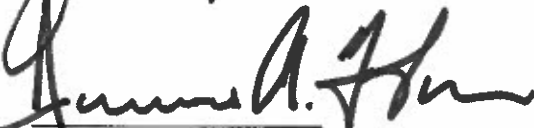
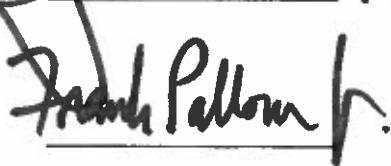
operators face an increased risk of lung disease from exposure to diesel exhaust. The carbon soot in diesel exhaust is also recognized as a potent global warming agent.

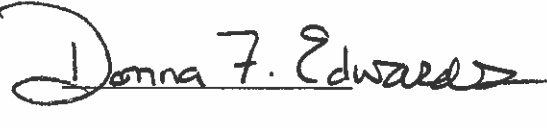
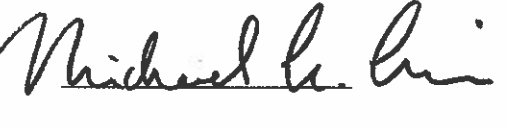
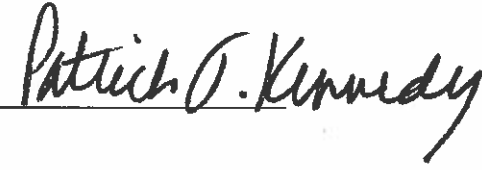

To address this problem, we request that transportation projects built with federal funds minimize any adverse impact on a community's air quality. This would mean requiring that construction vehicles working on federally funded transportation projects use a diesel particulate filter which can virtually eliminate a diesel engine's fine particulate emissions. If the construction equipment slated for use on a job does not already meet this level of control, we request that the Surface Transportation Authorization Act of 2009 include funding to pay for these filters.

Using clean diesel engines in transportation projects is a "win-win-win" proposition: rebuilding America with "green" jobs, reducing diesel emissions that threaten human health, and reducing black carbon emissions that contribute to global warming. Linking the clean-up of our nation's diesel construction fleet to the transportation projects they build provides an opportunity to incorporate real performance measures on air quality into project delivery.

We can all agree that the opportunity is at hand to transform our nation and our communities by enacting of the Surface Transportation Authorization Act of 2009. By reducing diesel pollution, protecting public health and addressing federal air quality objectives we are truly stepping into the 21st Century. We stand ready to work with you to achieve this goal. Thank you for your leadership and attention to this critical issue.

Sincerely,

Bob Fisher

Carolyn C. Fitzpatrick

John Layer

Eivind L. Engh

Shirley Jackson

Danny K. Davis

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Jim Moun

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