



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Environmental Groups Partner with Athens-Clarke County, University of Georgia and Washington County to Win Clean Diesel Stimulus Grant**

***\$1.7 million award will reduce toxic diesel particles, improve public health***

ATLANTA ( July 10, 2009) - Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) officials announced today Athens-Clarke County (ACC), University of Georgia (UGA), and Washington County were awarded \$1.7 million to install pollution control devices on diesel transit buses and municipal vehicles. Mothers & Others for Clean Air at the Georgia Conservancy and the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy (SACE) worked with representatives from ACC and UGA to develop a strong diesel retrofit project. They will lead the project's education and outreach efforts, delivering workshops on the health effects of diesel exhaust and strategies for reducing harmful particles through retrofit technologies and idling reduction.

The grant will fund pollution control retrofits for ACC's transit and fire and emergency vehicles, UGA's transit buses, and a variety of municipal diesel vehicles in Washington County. The project is expected to result in the reduction of .50 tons of particulate matter per year, as well as 13 tons of hydrocarbons and 91 tons of carbon monoxide.

The funds are provided under the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act of 2009 National Clean Diesel Funding Assistance Program. SACE and Mothers & Others for Clean Air represent Georgia in a national diesel coalition that lobbied to secure \$300 million to fund diesel emissions reduction projects as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

Diesel soot contains particulate matter, black carbon, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides and more than 40 hazardous air pollutants (HAPs) – all of which are dangerous to human health, especially to the developing bodies of children. The fine particles in diesel soot are so small that they penetrate deep into the lungs and get into the blood stream. Breathing diesel exhaust can contribute to both chronic and acute human health problems such as asthma attacks, reduced lung function, lung disease, cancer and even premature death. EPA's recent analysis of 181 toxic air pollutants concluded that diesel exhaust poses one of the greatest cancer risks of any form of air toxics.

“With 27 Georgia counties failing federal standards for fine particulates, we need to take every step possible to reduce emissions,” said Rebecca Watts Hull, program manager for Mothers & Others for Clean Air. “This award will help the Athens area reduce a particularly toxic form of particle pollution.”

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Recognizing the danger posed by dirty diesel exhaust, federal law now requires new buses and trucks to come equipped with the best available technology to control emissions. But because diesel engines last as long as 30 years, the majority of diesel engines on the road do not have this technology. Installing pollution control filters on buses, trucks and construction equipment is a cost effective way to solve the problem.

“We look forward to working with UGA, ACC and Washington County to reduce diesel emissions from their fleets,” said Anne Blair, Clean Diesel and Bioenergy Program Manager at SACE. “We expect another large pot of federal funding for diesel retrofits soon and will work with other Georgia municipalities to encourage and assist them in applying for funding to clean up their diesel fleets.”

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**Mothers & Others for Clean Air**, a program of the Georgia Conservancy, is dedicated to educating the public about the health effects of air pollution, advocating for policies that improve air quality and engaging Georgians in voluntary change and advocacy. <http://www.georgiaconservancy.org/mothersandothers/>

**Southern Alliance for Clean Energy** is a nonprofit organization that promotes responsible energy choices that create global warming solutions and ensure clean, safe, and healthy communities throughout the Southeast. [www.cleanenergy.org](http://www.cleanenergy.org)