

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO 2006-2007 GRAND JURY REPORTS (District: All))

**County of San Diego Response to Grand Jury Report:
“School Diesel Bus Emissions: You Take My Breath Away”
Issued May 9, 2007**

FINDINGS AND RESPONSES:

Finding: San Diego County school district diesel bus fleets pollute less than other counties in California and in other states. However, many older, polluting school buses are still on the road in San Diego County and pose a health threat for children who ride diesel school buses.

Response: Agree

Finding: Diesel school buses purchased prior to 1987 can pollute four times as much as a bus purchased in 2006. Purchasing new, cleaner running diesel school buses will reduce emissions by a factor of four. Older diesel school buses purchased between 1990 and 2000 can be retrofitted with particulate traps or have the engine replaced or modified with electronic tune ups, recycling the exhaust, turbo charging and using cleaner diesel fuel. Replaced and retrofitted diesel school buses funded by San Diego County APCD have reduced PM and NOx emissions by nearly 200 tons.

Response: Agree

Finding: Because of federal, state and local laws momentum is growing in San Diego County to provide more emission reduction funding for the present and future. In 2006 the federal government distributed \$7 million nationwide for school bus replacement/retrofitting to school districts and qualified organizations with diesel bus fleets. The state has distributed APCD funds throughout California from the lower emissions school bus program. San Diego county APCD has received and distributed to volunteer school districts \$13 million since 2000. California State Proposition 1B approved in November 2006 will provide \$200 million for state wide school diesel bus replacements/retrofit.

Response: Agree

RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESPONSES:

The 2006-2007 San Diego County Grand Jury recommends that the San Diego County Board of Supervisors and County Air Pollution Control District:

Recommendation 17-15: Adjust its priorities for distribution of EPA air quality improvement funds to improve local school district diesel bus fleets.

Response: The recommendation has been implemented. San Diego County has received relatively small amounts of federal EPA funding to reduce emissions from school buses. Thus far, all such funding has been provided by EPA through competitive grants from EPA’s Clean

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School Bus U.S.A program. This program provides very specific guidelines that are followed by the Air Pollution Control District in allocating the funding. The Grand Jury's recommended action was in place as standard operating procedure prior to contact with the Grand Jury.

Recommendation 17-16: Inform school districts in detail about potential district funding and guideline changes that could assist less affluent school districts to improve fleet emission levels.

Response: The recommendation has been implemented. Since 2001, there have been a number of programs administered by the Air Pollution Control District to reduce diesel emissions from school buses. For each program, the Air Pollution Control District has initiated extensive efforts to inform all San Diego County school districts of the availability of the funds, the requirements of each program, and how to apply for the funding. These efforts included letters, e-mails and phone calls as well as workshops. The Grand Jury's recommended action was in place as standard operating procedure prior to contact with the Grand Jury.

Recommendation 17-17: Advise San Diego County School Districts that older, polluting school buses that were replaced with new low polluting buses should be removed from the road.

Response: The recommendation has been implemented. State guidelines already require buses that are replaced to be removed from use and this is the standard practice of the Air Pollution Control District. The one exception is when a school district replaces a bus that is newer (cleaner) than a bus in another school district – the guidelines allow the Air Pollution Control District to use the newer bus to replace the older (dirtier) bus in the other school district. However, the dirtier bus that is replaced must be permanently removed from use. The Grand Jury's recommended action was in place as standard operating procedure prior to contact with the Grand Jury.