



HIGHLIGHTS

- DC and NYC to Purchase Diesel Hybrid Buses
- Federal Policy Update – Slow Progress on the TEA-21 Reauthorization
- Scientists Urge EPA to Strengthen PM Standards
- DC Receives Failing Grade in Air Quality Report
- Oil Industry Urges Flexibility on Low-Sulfur Diesel Rule
- California County Purchases Gasoline Hybrid Buses
- Biodiesel Grant for Maryland County
- Hydrogen Hybrid Bus Makes a Pit Stop at Washington DC
- Federal Court Orders EPA to Act on DC Smog Plan
- Children Exposed to More Pollution Inside School Buses
- Events
- Submit Your Clean Bus Story

NEWS

DC and NYC to Purchase Diesel Hybrid Buses

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) moved one step closer to adding hybrid buses to its fleet with members of the Board voting to purchase 100 new diesel hybrid buses. The Board declined to pursue the purchase of compressed natural gas (CNG) buses in favor of 117 regular diesel buses. Officials cited prohibitive additional cost of upgrading the fueling facilities for the CNG buses as the reason for the shift to hybrids. WMATA operates 1,450 buses including 164 CNG buses. The buses will be purchased at a cost of \$116 million over the next three years. Funding for the buses will come from WMATA's Infrastructure Replacement Program. However, the decision was contentious, with some board members voting against the decision to abandon the purchase of additional CNG buses in favor of the diesel buses. Those members contended that DC's serious air pollution problems warrant implementation of the cleanest available option which is CNG.

In related news, New York City (NYC) Transit decided to forgo additional CNG buses in favor of more diesel hybrids. NYC Transit has already purchased 325 diesel hybrid buses representing seven percent of 4,512 vehicles in the fleet. The transit agency will purchase 100 diesel hybrid buses with the option for 400 additional hybrids, instead of the 120 CNG buses originally proposed. NYC Transit currently operates 481 compressed natural gas (CNG) buses. The transit agency had planned to convert a Manhattanville bus depot to a compressed natural gas center at a cost of \$50 million in response to complaints that diesel depots were contributing to high rates of childhood asthma and cancer. The decision to go with diesel hybrids instead of the CNG buses is likely to generate controversy, with opponents of the proposal charging that the agency is renegeing on its pledge to clean up the depot.

For more information on the WMATA bus story go to:
<http://www.eesi.org/publications/Newsletters/Clean%20Bus%20Update/WasPostCNGstory.pdf>

TOP

DC Receives Failing Grade in Air Quality Report

The American Lung Association (ALA) awarded the Washington Metropolitan area an 'F' grade for air quality in its *State of the Air: 2005 Report* released on April 28, 2005. The report ranks urban areas in the U.S with the unhealthiest air based on prevalence of particulate pollution and ozone. Speaking at a press conference organized in Washington DC, Dr. Bailus Walker Jr., Vice President, American Public Health Association and Board Member, ALA Washington DC, said that over 7.9 million people including 2 million children in the Washington Metro area are breathing air with dangerously high levels of particulate matter. He attributed the poor air quality in large part to emissions from dirty diesel buses and trucks in the region. He emphasized the need to explore the role of alternative fuels in improving air quality. The DC chapter of ALA has been advocating the use of biodiesel in buses especially in DC's transit fleet. Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) operates approximately 1300 diesel buses.

Also speaking at the conference was Gladys Mack, vice chairman of the WMATA Board, which recently made the decision to purchase regular diesel buses instead of compressed natural gas (CNG). She emphasized that WMATA was exploring all available technology to improve air quality and CNG was not being phased out in favor for diesel ([see related story](#)). She indicated that 250 new CNG buses will be pressed into service beginning in Fall 2005, and stressed that CNG along with hybrid buses will continue to be part WMATA's strategy to reduce emissions in the region.

Read the American Lung Association *State of the Air: 2005 Report* at:
<http://www.lungusa.org/site/pp.asp?c=dvLUK9O0E&b=564421>

TOP

Oil Industry Urges Flexibility on Low Sulfur Diesel Rule

Oil industry associations, including the American Petroleum Institute, National Petrochemical and Refiners Association and Association of Oil Pipelines, are urging the Bush administration, EPA and Congress to allow them flexibility in complying with EPA's highway diesel rule. Beginning in June 2006, refineries will be required to supply highway diesel with sulfur content no greater than 15 parts per million across the country. In a letter addressed to the White House, senior members of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, and Samuel Bodman, Energy Secretary, the oil industry contends that distribution and other technical difficulties are likely to occur initially because the change in diesel fuel is substantial. They are requesting "reasonable flexibility" from the EPA in the supply and distribution of the fuel early on and warn that supply problems are likely in the absence of flexibility.

TOP

California County Purchases Gasoline Hybrid Buses

Montebello, CA recently joined the hybrid bus club with the purchase of five gasoline hybrid buses, adding to its existing fleet of 68 diesel buses. The buses, funded through \$2.55 million in state and federal transportation grants, will be supplied by New Flyer Industries. The 40-foot buses will be fitted with ISE Corp's Thundervolt gasoline-electric series hybrid system. The bus order is part of a 76-bus purchase by six counties in California, including Long Beach, Orange, Norwalk, Gardena, Montebello and Fresno. Delivery of the gasoline hybrid buses is expected in June 2005, and they are likely to be pressed into service in July. The city eventually plans to replace 40 diesel buses with hybrids starting in 2006.

More information on the hybrid buses available at:
https://www.newflyer.com/index/gas_electric_california

TOP

Biodiesel Grant for Maryland County

Queen Anne County, Maryland will soon begin to use biodiesel in its county fleet aided by a grant from the Maryland Energy Administration and the U.S Department of Energy. The \$60,000 grant will fund the purchase of B20 (80 percent diesel and 20 percent biodiesel) for use in approximately 188 vehicles including 20 school buses. Queen Anne's County is the largest producer of soybeans in the state, producing 11 percent of the 10.8 million bushel crop in 2002. As a result, the increased use of biodiesel is expected to boost the local economy.

For more information on this grant, please visit:
<http://www.energy.state.md.us/press/050405.pdf>

TOP

Hydrogen Hybrid Bus Makes a Pit Stop at Washington DC

In conjunction with the National Hydrogen Association Conference held in Washington, DC, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and ISE Corp. made available a hydrogen hybrid bus for viewing and rides at the U.S. Department of Transportation headquarters on March 28, 2005. The bus is equipped with a Hydrogen Hybrid Internal Combustion Engine (HHICE), a Ford Triton V-10 engine modified by Ford to combust hydrogen. It also uses a variant of ISE's hybrid-electric drive system. Combusting hydrogen in an internal combustion engine, while not zero emissions, provides 99% of the emission reduction benefits of a fuel cell system, at a fraction of the cost. The bus on display was part of the SunLine Transit fleet in California and is the first commercially viable Near Zero Emission Vehicle (NZEV) technology for large transit buses. In addition to funding support from FTA, the following partners also contributed resources: SunLine Transit, California Energy Commission, South Coast Air Quality Management District, Ford Motor Co., Natural Resources Canada, Province of Manitoba, Chula Vista Transit, Manitoba Transit, and New Flyer Industries.

More information is available at:
http://www.isecorp.com/ise_news/ev_bulletins/dec-04-hhice-rollout-sunline-transit.php

TOP

Federal Court Orders EPA to Act on DC Smog Plan

The U.S Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was ordered by a federal judge to expedite action on a smog reduction plan for the Washington DC area. A U.S District Judge ruled that EPA repeatedly missed deadlines to approve the DC metropolitan area pollution reduction plan and ordered the agency to act on the plan by May 3, 2005. The judge also sharply rebuked the EPA for an "unblemished record of nonperformance" in complying with sections of the Clean Air Act.

The Washington DC area suffers from serious air pollution problems and was designated as a non-attainment area for ozone and particulate matter federal air quality standards. As a result, it was required to submit plans to the EPA outlining measures to improve the region's air quality. Old diesel buses contribute significantly to the ozone problem in the region, emitting nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds which are ozone-forming precursors. Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America recently ranked Washington DC as the fifth most challenging place in America for people living with asthma.

For more on this story, click here:
<http://www.eesi.org/publications/Newsletters/Clean%20Bus%20Update/WasPostsmogstory.pdf>

TOP

REGULATORY MEASURES

Scientists Urge EPA to Strengthen PM Standards

A coalition of 100 doctors, scientists, professors, and researchers are urging the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to strengthen its fine particulate matter standard (PM 2.5). In a letter sent to EPA's Scientific Advisory Board in April, they contend that recent studies indicate that current particulate PM 2.5 standards do not adequately protect public health, especially of vulnerable populations like children and older people. They recommend strengthening the 24-hour fine particle standard between 25-35 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ from the current 65 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ and the annual fine particle standard between 12-14 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ from the existing 15 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. Under the Clean Air Act, EPA is required to review and revise standards for criteria pollutants every five years. The current fine PM standards were set in 1997. Under a consent decree with environmental groups, the EPA has until December 2005 to determine if these standards need revision with a final decision due on September 27, 2006. In December 2004 EPA designated 225 counties (partially or entirely) in 20 states to be in non-attainment of the PM 2.5 standard.

In related news, EPA removed 21 counties from its list of areas in non-attainment of the PM 2.5 standard. Counties in Alabama, California, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia were removed from the list based on 2004 monitoring data.

More information is available at:

<http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/n/a/2005/04/05/national/w174901D70.DTL>

TOP

LEGISLATION

Federal Transportation Policy Update

The transportation bill is finally moving forward in the Senate. Initially, the bill appeared to be stalled after failure to receive floor time in March or early April. Shifting legislative priorities including the FY'05 war supplemental spending bill and the energy bill, threatened to hold up the progress of the transportation bill, possibly forcing another extension of the TEA-21 legislation.

However, a quick markup by the Finance Committee on April 19 completed committee action on the bill and set the stage for floor action. The markup included an amendment offered by Senator Charles Schumer (D-NY) to boost the Qualified Transportation Fringe Benefit for transit from \$105 to \$155. Members of the committee reiterated that the total authorization level of \$284 billion amount was inadequate and would be debated on the floor. Chairman Charles Grassley (R-IA) and Minority Ranking Member Max Baucus (D-MT) indicated that they would offer an amendment on the floor to increase funding levels. Senator John Kerry also indicated that he would offer a floor amendment to boost transit's share of funding to 18.8 percent. The Senate Banking Committee marked up the transit portion of the bill last month at \$51.6 billion, which represents 18.2 percent of the total funding for the transportation bill. The Senate began debate on the bill on April 26 and will continue in May after a week of recess. This would leave lawmakers less than a month to reconcile differences with the House before the current TEA-

21 legislation expires on May 31, 2005.

More information on the House Transportation Bill is available at:
<http://www.house.gov/transportation/>

Text of the Senate Transportation Bill is available at:
http://epw.senate.gov/109th/SAFETEA_2005.pdf

TOP

RESEARCH | REPORTS

Children Exposed to More Pollution Inside School Buses

A study published in the April 15th issue of Environmental Science and Technology Journal reveals that children riding in diesel powered school buses are exposed to larger amounts of pollution inside the bus than outside. The study which was carried out by researchers at the University of California, Berkeley measured pollution levels in six empty school buses traveling established routes in Los Angeles. Researchers found that in a single day, on average, a child riding a school bus is likely to breathe in seven to 70 times more exhaust from the bus when compared to the school bus emissions a resident is likely to inhale in an urban area. It was observed that emissions from the engine crankcase were directly entering the bus before they were treated by scrubbers. Estimates indicate that for every metric ton of pollution emitted by a school bus, the cumulative mass of pollution inhaled by 40 or more kids on the bus was comparable to or larger than the cumulative mass inhaled by all other people in an urban area. Scientists concluded that the cleanup of school buses would be more cost effective in terms of health care savings when compared to clean up of other heavy-duty vehicles. There are approximately 450,000 school buses in the country of which 395,000 are diesel powered.

Abstract of the study available at:
<http://pubs.acs.org/cgi-bin/abstract.cgi/esthag/2005/39/i08/abs/es040377v.html>

TOP

Correction

In the March issue of the National Clean Bus Update, names of partners in the hybrid truck project should have read: the U.S Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Eaton Corporation-Fluid Power, International Truck and Engine Corporation, U.S. Army – National Automotive Center, and Morgan-Olson. The omission is regretted.



CARB Hearing on Urban Bus Standards

**April 27, 2005, 1:00 to 4:00 pm
Sacramento, CA**

The California Air Resources Board will be holding a public workshop to discuss proposed modifications to the Urban Bus Exhaust Emission Standards and Test Procedures - 1985 and Subsequent Model Heavy-Duty Urban Bus Engines and Vehicles.

For more information, or to register, please visit: <http://www.arb.ca.gov/msprog/bus/bus.htm>

TOP

CARB Fuels Public Consultation

**May 2, 2005, 1:30 pm to 4:00 pm
Sacramento, CA**

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) will hold a workshop to discuss the CARB's regulatory and non-regulatory fuel related activities. Topics will include issues relating to the California Phase 3 Reformulated Gasoline regulations and the California diesel fuel regulations for vehicular and non-vehicular uses including a discussion on biodiesel.

For more information, please visit:
<http://www.arb.ca.gov/fuels/gasoline/meeting/2005/mtg2005.htm>

TOP



11th Annual Clean Cities Conference & Expo

**May 1-4
Palm Springs, CA**

For more information, or to register, please visit: <http://www.afvi.org/palmsprings/>

TOP



17th Annual Tour de Sol

May 13–16, 2005

Saratoga and Albany, NY

Monte Carlo-style Rally and 100-mpg Challenge at Tour de Sol

Northeast Sustainable Energy Association (NESEA) members who own hybrid cars or who are using biodiesel in their diesel vehicles are invited to join a new competition that ends at the 2005 Tour de Sol. Rally participants compete for up to \$10,000 and 35 awards for the most fuel-efficient production-hybrid or biodiesel vehicles. \$5,000 of this money will go to the most fuel-efficient vehicle that breaks the 100-MPG barrier over the course of the 150-mile rally.

To learn more and to register for the Monte Carlo event please visit:

<http://www.nesea.org/transportation/tour/2005montecarloevent.html>

For more information on Tour de Sol, or to register, please visit:

<http://www.nesea.org/transportation/tour/>



Alaska Clean Energy Symposium II: Alaska's Role in Solving National Transportation Energy Challenges

May 24-26, 2005

Anchorage, Alaska

For more information, or to register, please visit:

http://www.calstart.org/programs/alaska/Alaska_Background.php

[TOP](#)



American Public Transportation Association 2005 Bus and Paratransit Conference

May 15-17, 2005

Columbus, Ohio

For more information, or to register, please visit:

http://www.apta.com/conferences_calendar/bus/

SUBMIT YOUR CLEAN BUS STORY

EESI's National Clean Bus Project is eager to learn about your clean bus fleet. If you are in the process of procurement, or if you already operate buses that produce fewer emissions and consume less fuel than conventional diesel buses, let us know if we haven't heard – and told -- your story! Provide (1) the name of your organization and primary contact person; (2) type of bus engine, fuel, and other emission control devices used; (3) number of buses; (4) funding sources; (5) costs and benefits; (6) and lessons learned. We'll post this information on our website and include it in future editions of the Clean Bus Update! Send this information to Shefali Ranganathan at sranganathan@eesi.org or call 202-662-1883. More information can be mailed to 122 C St., NW, Suite 630, Washington, DC 20001.

The Clean Bus Update is a monthly periodical providing an overview of current program and policy activities related to the deployment of low-polluting, energy-efficient buses in the United States. Topics include technology developments, clean vehicle deployment, energy consumption, the environment, government policy, and public health. The National Clean Bus Network is an informal coalition of public and private sector organizations working to increase the use of cleaner bus technologies and fuels. The National Clean Bus Network is a free resource to all clean bus stakeholders. If there are issues we are missing and you think we should cover, please let us know.

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