

**Resolution of the Board of Directors  
Supporting the Texas Clean School Bus Program**

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The Greater Houston Partnership supports appropriate funding for the Clean School Bus Program established by HB 3469, 79<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature. The Partnership recognizes the need to protect vulnerable populations from excessive exposure to diesel emissions. This program is a cost-effective way to reduce a demonstrated childhood exposure to harmful air pollutants and achieve creditable State Implementation Plan (SIP) emission reductions. A recent study concludes that pound for pound the greatest health benefits can be achieved by reducing school bus emissions instead of other types of vehicles such as 18-wheelers and construction equipment.



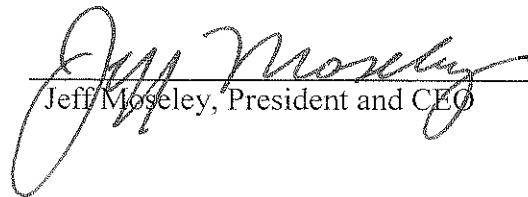
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John Hofmeister, Chairman



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Dan Wolterman, Secretary



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Jeff Moseley, President and CEO



## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** February 7, 2006

**TO:** Board of Directors

**FROM:** Doug Foshee  
Chairman, Environment Advisory Committee

**SUBJECT:** Support of Clean School Bus Initiative

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### RECOMMENDATION

The Greater Houston Partnership supports appropriate funding for the Clean School Bus Program established by HB 3469, 79<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature. The Partnership recognizes the need to protect vulnerable populations from excessive exposure to diesel emissions. This program is a cost-effective way to reduce a demonstrated childhood exposure to harmful air pollutants and achieve creditable State Implementation Plan (SIP) emission reductions. A recent study concludes that pound for pound the greatest health benefits can be achieved by reducing school bus emissions instead of other types of vehicles such as 18-wheelers and construction equipment.<sup>1</sup>

### BACKGROUND

The Houston-Galveston-Brazoria area is currently a non-attainment area for ozone and is approaching potential non-attainment status for fine particulate matter due to increasing PM2.5 levels.

Current research indicates that pollution from diesel vehicles, including ozone forming nitrogen oxides (NOx), particulate matter, and toxic chemicals has health implications for everyone, especially children who are particularly vulnerable to the effects of diesel emissions, which can cause respiratory disease and exacerbate long-term conditions such as asthma. Heavy-duty diesel vehicles, including diesel school buses, are significant sources of NOx emissions and fine particulate matter.

Over 35,000 school buses transport more than one million Texas children to and from school, field trips, and athletic events every day. School buses continue to be the safest way to transport school children, however, diesel pollution levels in and around school buses can be five times higher than background levels. Consequently, school buses represent a "hot spot" of pollution exposure for school children. This result is due to emissions from the tailpipe and engine crankcase contaminating the cabin where school children ride.

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<sup>1</sup> Marshall, Julian D and Behrentz, E., "Vehicle Self-Pollution Intake Fraction: Children's Exposure to School Bus Emissions," *Environmental Science and Technology*, 2005, 2559-2563

A 2003 year-end survey revealed that 32% of Texas school buses were less than six years old, 32% were 6-10 years old, and 36% were over 10 years old. Newer buses have to meet progressively tighter emissions standards; however, thousands of middle-aged buses will continue polluting for years because diesel engines are “workhorses” that can last 20 years or more.

HB 3469 (79<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature) established a Clean School Bus Program as part of the Texas Emission Reduction Plan (TERP), and authorized funding through a portion of TERP revenues otherwise dedicated for diesel emission reduction grants. However, an appropriation was not made and the program remained unfunded during the 2006-2007 biennium. Using the Clean School Bus Program to replace the older buses and retrofit them with emissions reduction technology would afford significant reductions in particulate emissions and, to a lesser extent, NOx. As with other TERP projects, SIP credit is possible for school bus technologies that produce NOx reductions.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT**

Requires no new state funds. Funding would be made as a portion of the overall appropriation to the existing TERP program.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION**

The Greater Houston Partnership will communicate its support of the Clean School Bus Program to the Texas Legislature and will promote the benefits of the program to the regional business community.

#### **RESOURCES REQUIRED**

This recommendation can be implemented with available Greater Houston Partnership staff and within the current operating budget.