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Council Member Rosenthal Calls for Biodiesel in School Buses

B5 Biodiesel reduces health risks to children

Schools buses can accept B5 Biodiesel with no modifications

On Thursday Council Member Helen Rosenthal introduced legislation to require all New York City school buses to use fuel that is a minimum of 5% biodiesel, known as B5 biodiesel. The bill would impact the over 9,500 school buses contracted by the City's Department of Education.

New York City law already requires City-owned and -operated diesel vehicles to use a minimum of B5 biodiesel fuel, but as school buses are contracted, they are exempt from the law.

In 2001 the Natural Resources Defense Council found toxic diesel exhaust levels *inside* school buses using diesel fuel to be 23 to 46 times higher than levels considered to be a significant cancer risk.

Biodiesel has lower sulfur content and toxicity than diesel, making it more environmentally friendly and less damaging to air quality. A 2001 Department of Energy study found that biodiesel emissions pose substantially lower health risks than diesel emissions.

Additionally, the transition to B5 biodiesel is easy: any vehicle built after 1993 requires no modifications of any kind to accept biodiesel fuel.

Over 150,000 New York City public school children ride school buses to school.

“Children who take the school bus should not be breathing in toxic diesel exhaust on their way to and from school each day. This bill will promote better health for kids and for the environment, and it will help kids and parents alike breathe a little easier,” said **Council Member Helen Rosenthal**.

Council Member Costa Constantinides, Chair of the Council's Environmental Protection Committee, said, "Using B5 biodiesel in school buses will be more environmentally-friendly and improve our air quality. As we move toward our goal of reducing our carbon emissions by 80% by 2050, including school buses in the city's B5 mandate would be a significant step. I look forward to working together with Council Member Rosenthal on encouraging more use of renewable energy such as biofuels."

“We applaud the city council for taking steps to address local air quality concerns by requiring cleaner fuel for NYC school buses. The prevalence of asthma has increased significantly in the last 20 years and any move to improve air quality is a step in the right direction for today’s children and future generations,” said **Rory Christian, New York Director of Clean Energy for the Environmental Defense Fund**.

“While there is no silver bullet in our quest to make the nation’s fuel system more efficient and resilient, biodiesel is an important domestically produced fuel that can be an important part of the solution,” said **Jeremy Kranowitz, Executive Director of Sustainable America**. “Requiring B5 biodiesel use in New York City’s school buses will reduce kids’ exposure to toxic pollutants, reduce New York City’s greenhouse gas emissions, and contribute to our nation’s continued push towards sustainable energy independence.”

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