



STATE OF MISSISSIPPI  
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## MISSISSIPPI RECOGNIZED AS FIRST STATE TO RETROFIT 100% OF SCHOOL BUSES

(BILOXI, Miss.) –The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) was recognized Wednesday by the Environmental Protection Agency for its program to retrofit public school buses with Diesel Oxidation Catalysts (DOCs). Mississippi was the first state to retrofit 100 percent of eligible school buses.

At an event in Biloxi, MDEQ Executive Director Trudy Fisher was recognized by Gwen Keyes Fleming, EPA Region 4 Administrator, for Mississippi's successful program. The Mississippi School Bus Retrofit Project, initiated by MDEQ's Air Division in 2009, paid for the installation of Diesel Oxidation Catalysts on 1,931 school buses in 108 public school districts. The DOCs help protect students' health by reducing tailpipe emissions including reducing particulate matter by 40 percent, hydrocarbons by 70 percent, and carbon monoxide by 40 percent. In addition, the Air Division has been working with the Mississippi Department of Education and the American Lung Association to reduce the amount of time that school buses idle unnecessarily which will further reduce exhaust emissions.

“MDEQ's Air Division has been aggressive and creative in considering the issue of reducing tailpipe emissions around students, finding ways to fund the program, and implementing it to a successful conclusion. Being the first state to complete retrofitting is a significant achievement and demonstrates the 'can do' attitude of this agency. We were able to protect students' health and to use the funds prudently while stimulating Mississippi's economy at a time when it was needed. School buses are the

safest and most efficient way to transport students, and we want to ensure that it's a healthy trip," said Trudy Fisher, MDEQ Executive Director.

A DOC is a porous ceramic honeycomb-like structure that is coated with a material that catalyzes a chemical reaction to reduce pollution. There is no maintenance needed for DOCs, and they do not affect the fuel economy of buses. The DOCs were installed statewide on eligible buses built from 1998 to 2006 in participating school districts. Newer buses do not need retrofitting due to stricter emissions standards for diesel engines implemented in 2007. Purchase and installation of these devices was paid for by MDEQ, at no cost to school districts, using Diesel Emission Reduction (DERA), American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), and Supplemental Environmental Project funds.

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