

May 17, 2017



Senate Majority Leader Ginny Burdick, Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Rules
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Chair Burdick and Members of the Committee:

Subject: The importance of SB 1008 to the health of Oregon's children

Children First for Oregon is the primary source for data on the wellbeing of Oregon's 860,000 kids. Our program, United for Kids, works with partners like the Oregon Environmental Council, to make Oregon the best place to be a kid. We collaborate with stakeholders from across the state to advance policies and programs that protect and promote the economic security, education, health and safety of all children in Oregon.

Clean air is crucial to a healthy childhood. Because children breathe at a faster rate than adults, they are particularly sensitive to air pollutants.¹ For the wellbeing of the 8 percent of Oregon children with asthma and 17 percent of children experiencing significant health issues, it is imperative that the state attempts to reduce exposure to air pollutants such as diesel.²

Children First for Oregon supports SB 1008 and its various efforts to reduce diesel emissions. Although the removal of deadlines diminishes the bill's capacity to clean our air, passing the -3 amendments is still a step forward. One change contained in the amendment will allow schools more time to make the less expensive retrofits to school buses with higher rates of diesel emissions. Without this extension schools will be forced to make costly replacements.

In the absence of legislative action, many of Oregon's children have little chance of reduced exposure to diesel. The majority of exposure to diesel particles comes from exhaust generated near highways and other roads.³ Children in urban and rural settings have little choice but to travel on roads shared by outdated diesel engines to get to school, sports practice, and family events on a daily basis.

SB 1008 will stem the damage done to our children's health from exposure to diesel emissions. With clean air to breathe, our children will be healthier and better able to reach their full potential.

Thank you for your support of Oregon's children.

Sincerely,

Tonia Hunt
Executive Director

¹ Diesel Exhaust and Your Health, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, available at: https://www3.epa.gov/region1/eco/diesel/health_effects.html

² Kids Count Data Center, Annie E. Casey Foundation, available at: <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data#OR/2/27/28,29,30,31,32,34,33/char/0>

³ Diesel Exhaust and Cancer, American Cancer Society, available at: <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/cancer-causes/diesel-exhaust-and-cancer.html>