

paul keady <paul_keady@hotmail.com>

Since spring of 2016, regulators and leaders in Oregon have had an unprecedented mandate to address the risk of polluted air in Oregon. And they have been talking tough. As we enter 2019, residents of some of Oregon's most polluted neighborhoods are anticipating relief as 20 of the most egregious polluters are "brought in" to the new Cleaner Air Oregon program to address risk from industrial air contaminants.

But it has always been understood that the biggest risk faced by Oregonians from air pollution comes from the reliance in our state on older Diesel engine technology and the lack of regulations or other aggressive work to phase them out.

A recent [Multnomah County report](#) lays out the cost Oregonians pay every year we don't eliminate the deadly pollution from older diesel engines:

- Multnomah County ranks highest in total and exposure concentrations across Oregon and the Tri-County region is in the 95th percentile nationally.
- Over 400 premature deaths
- Over 140 non-fatal heart attacks
- Over 25,000 work loss days
- Cost to Oregon: over \$3 Billion annually

Why we can't wait another year more than we need to:

- Children are most vulnerable to the long-term impacts from Diesel engines, because their lungs are still developing and they breathe on average 50 percent more air per pound of body weight than adults.
- Recent studies link exposure to near-roadway emissions, to lower school performance and attendance. At least 10 Portland Public Schools are in the danger zone of too close to high road emissions that can adversely impact the students.
- Pre-natal exposure to pregnant women has been linked to an increase in incidence of neurodevelopmental disorders like Autism Spectrum Disorder.
- There are no "safe" areas in our metro region, but the most dangerous diesel hotspots are in neighborhoods with higher proportions of people of color. The disproportionate exposure to diesel mirrors health disparities in the community, particularly asthma, cardiovascular disease and low birth weights.