

Testimony in support of HB 3457
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Senate Committee on Education
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This bill is about protecting our children's health and saving school districts money. I am here today in support of HB 3457 to reduce idling of Texas school buses at schools or school events.

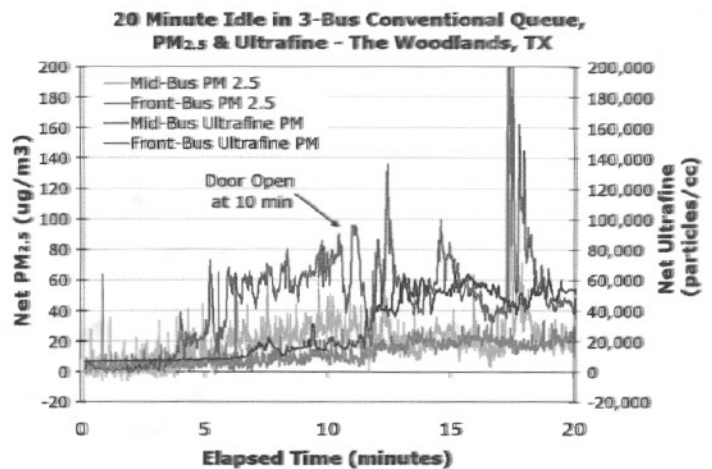
More than 35,000 buses transport about 1.5 million Texas children to and from school each day – and approximately 90 percent of those buses are diesel powered. While school buses are generally a safe way for children to get to school, they present hidden health hazards. Diesel buses emit several dangerous pollutants that can make their way inside the bus, into the cabin air that our children breathe, exposing them to an extra dose of pollution up to five times higher than in the outside air.

Exposure to diesel exhaust can cause lung damage and respiratory problems. Diesel exhaust also exacerbates asthma and existing allergies, and long-term exposure is thought to increase the risk of lung cancer. Diesel pollution puts children at particular risk due to their high exposures and special vulnerability: children breathe more quickly than adults and take in more air per unit body weight.

In addition to exposure in and around the school buses, when buses idle in the school yard the exhaust can pollute the air inside the school building and pose a health risk throughout the day.

Last year, we partnered with the Conroe Independent School District to investigate the presence of diesel exhaust inside Texas school buses. The following graph depicts the levels of fine and ultra-fine diesel particle pollution that built up inside a school bus during a 20 minute idling scenario. Even with doors closed - the pollution levels increased significantly.

Configuration of Idling Bus Queue



In addition to reducing children's exposure to these harmful pollutants, reduced idling also saves schools money. A typical school bus burns approximately one-half to 1 gallon of diesel fuel for each hour it idles. If a school district operates 50 buses and each bus reduces its idling time by just 30 minutes per day, at \$2 per gallon of diesel fuel, the district would save over \$4,500 per school year in fuel costs.

This bill will protect children's health AND save the state money and that is not a combination we often see. I urge you to support HB 3457.