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Jack P. Broadbent
EXECUTIVE OFFICER/APCO

MAR 27 2008

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March 24, 2008

Clerk of the Boards
California Air Resources Board
1001 "I" Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: COMMENTS ON DRAFT 2008 LOWER EMISSION SCHOOL BUS PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Dear Clerk of the Boards:

I thank the California Air Resources Board for the opportunity to provide comments on the draft 2008 Lower Emission School Bus Program (LESBP) Guidelines. We have reviewed the draft Guidelines and submit the following comments.

(1) Restriction of bus replacement to buses with a California Highway Patrol certification as of 12/31/05 and that is still current. BAAQMD believes that restricting replacement only to buses that meet this criterion should be revisited. As noted in both the September 2007 workshop and the February 2008 meeting that ARB hosted, there are circumstances in which a School District may let the CHP certification for a bus lapse (e.g., if the bus is in the shop for an extended time), and then renew this certification once the bus can be put back in service. Buses that recently have faced this situation would be excluded from being replaced, based on the draft criterion. BAAQMD encourages ARB either: (1) to allow replacement of a bus if it was certified a certain number of years over a longer time frame (e.g., two of the last four years, as was suggested during the February meeting); or (2) to allow for a case-by-case consideration by ARB of buses that do not meet the draft criterion.

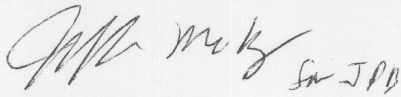
(2) Policies and Procedures Manual. BAAQMD requests additional flexibility in how funds are spent on retrofits versus replacements. At present, the guidelines require a retrofit implementation plan to be included as part of the District's manual. This plan must include the District's commitment to fund retrofits as a set percentage of remaining funds after expenditures to replace pre-1977 buses. Obtaining an accurate number of retrofits that grantees will apply for on a voluntary basis is extremely difficult, even for air districts with extensive experience in this program. By setting a rigid percentage for retrofits, air districts will effectively lose the ability to fund projects with greater emissions reductions benefits.

Spare the Air

(3) *Cost cap of \$140,000 per diesel school bus.* This cap should be raised to reflect the actual true cost of a new school bus. In funding replacement buses with FY 2005/06 LESBP funds and AB923 funds, BAAQMD found that most diesel buses cost more than this cap. Specifically, fourteen of the eighteen diesel buses we funded cost \$141,350.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the draft 2008 LESBP Guidelines. My staff and I look forward to working with ARB in the continued successful implementation of the program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jack P. Broadbent" with a flourish at the end.

Jack P. Broadbent
Executive Officer/APCO

cc: James N. Goldstene, California Air Resources Board
Lucina Negrete, California Air Resources Board