

Lan Danh
08-11-3



December 11, 2008

Ms. Mary D. Nichols, Chair
California Air Resources Board
1001 I Street
Sacramento, California 95814

RE: Agenda Item 08-11-3 Proposed School Bus Regulations

Dear Ms. Nichols:

California ranks last in the nation for the number of public school children that ride a school bus. Yet, a ride on a California school bus is the safest form of surface transportation in the nation. Given the fact that a ride on a California school bus is the safest why is the number of students that ride a California school bus on the decline. The answer is not elusive, school transportation is under funded by 55%. School districts are constantly faced with making an all too familiar decision, books or buses. Last year home-to-school transportation encroached on the General Funds of California schools approximately \$650,000,000 and now the ARB wants to add in the neighborhood of \$500,000 to that figure, unconscionable. Adding more unfunded mandates to school transportation will do nothing more than further reducing the number of students who ride the bus; thereby, exposing kids to even greater peril.

When you legislate and/or regulate by emotion you invariably end up with a bad law and/or regulation; you never want the true facts, or heaven forbid, common sense to effect a decision based on emotion, as demonstrated today. If the ARB truly wanted to improve air quality they would do everything within their power to spend every current dollar on replacing school buses and securing additional dollars to significantly increase the number of students who ride a California school bus. Wasting one red cent on mufflers is making another cottage industry wealthy at the expense of our kids.

I urge the Board to truly put the kids first and not a fictitious notch on some myopic staff member(s) air quality belt and remove school buses from this rule and prohibit the purchase of glorified mufflers.

Regards,

Kirk Hunter
CEO Southwest Transportation Agency



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