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## **YELLOW SCHOOL BUSES GO GREEN FOR LYNDEN SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**Mount Vernon, WA (May 20, 2009)** – The Northwest Clean Air Agency congratulates the Lynden School District for becoming a partner in the Washington Clean School Bus Retrofit Program and retrofitting all its eligible school buses with equipment that reduces diesel emissions.

The Lynden School District has received over \$52,000 to retrofit all of its 20 eligible school buses with Diesel Oxidation Catalysts (DOCs). These DOCs, attached to the bus exhaust system, reduce fine particle emissions by 30 percent and toxic emissions by up to 50 percent. The District has also installed devices that reduce emissions inside the cab of the bus where students and drivers face the highest exposure to diesel exhaust.

The Washington Clean School Bus Retrofit Program is a voluntary program funded by the State and implemented by the Northwest Clean Air Agency in Island, Skagit and Whatcom counties. Through this Clean School Bus program, the Agency is in the process of retrofitting all eligible school buses within its three-county jurisdiction with emission control technology.

Why is this important? Diesel pollution has serious health implications for everyone, especially children. Children breathe in twice as much air relative to their body weight than do adults, and their underdeveloped lung systems make them more sensitive to pollutants in diesel exhaust. Breathing diesel exhaust is responsible for increased cases of asthma, hospital admissions and emergency room visits, and increased cancer risk over a lifetime.

“Although school buses have proven to be the safest way to transport our children to and from school, reducing bus exhaust emissions will further protect our children,” said Mark Asmundson, Director of the Northwest Air Pollution Authority. “Thanks to strong support from the Washington State Legislature and by working together, we can reduce pollution from our school buses.”

According to the California Air Resources Board, every dollar spent cleaning up diesel emissions (through exhaust retrofits, vehicle replacements, clean fuels, idle reduction, etc.) saves three to eight dollars in improved health and lower operating and maintenance costs for diesel fleets.

Though post 2007 engines are required to be 95% cleaner than older ones, more than 11 million diesel engines in operation today do not meet EPA’s new clean diesel standards. Diesel exhaust will continue to be an air pollution concern for years to come, because these older engines can continue to operate for 20 to 30 years.

EPA established innovative programs to accelerate emission reductions from older diesel engines to provide more immediate air quality benefits. These programs are similar to the Washington Clean School Bus Retrofit Program. Visit <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/pubs/0602018.pdf> for more information about diesel emissions and school bus retrofits.

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