June 3, 2015

We're **excited to share** that this morning, **Mayor Marty Walsh signed** into law ***An Ordinance to Protect Air Quality throughout the City Of Boston by Reducing Fuel Emissions***, the final version of our Diesel Emissions Reduction Ordinance (DERO) that will reduce harmful pollution caused by diesel vehicles and idling. This comes after five years of organizing and working with our partners at **Clean Water Action**.



DERO requires pre-2007 diesel-powered vehicles and equipment used by the city and its contractors to be retrofitted with emission-reduction equipment, and includes tools for proper enforcement, such as allowing more city employees to inspect and ticket violators of the current state idling law.

"DERO is another victory in REEP's 19-year campaign to improve air quality," said **Dacia Jordan**, a **Roxbury Environmental Empowerment Project (REEP)** alum and campaign leader. "I've been involved with air quality work since 2009, my freshman year of high school. My whole family has asthma except me - it touches home so I wanted to make a difference."



The ordinance requires pre-2007 city-owned or operated vehicles to be retrofitted with equipment that reduces diesel emissions by at least 20 percent by the end of 2015. There are exceptions for

emergency vehicles, snow removal equipment and rarely used equipment. Requirements for diesel vehicles and equipment used on new city contracts of over $2 million would phase in over three years.

- Fiscal Year 2016: Half of all pre-2007 diesel vehicles and equipment used in these contracts are required to use retrofits achieving at least a 20 percent reduction in pollution.
- Fiscal Year 2017: All pre-2007 diesel vehicles and equipment would be required to use retrofits achieving at least a 20 percent reduction in pollution.
- Fiscal Year 2018: From now on, all pre-2007 non-retrofitted diesel vehicles and equipment (such as ones not under previous contracts) will be required to use retrofits achieving at least 85 percent or higher pollution reductions.



Massachusetts limits unnecessary idling to five minutes, with more stringent rules in school zones, and requires diesel vehicles to use ultra-low sulfur fuel. To address the differences in authority between city agencies, DERO simplifies oversight of the idling law, ensuring consistent enforcement between the Boston Police Department, Boston Transportation Department and the Air Pollution Control Commission. Fines for excess idling will be set at $100 for the first offense and $500 for subsequent offenses.

Diesel fuel is used in most heavy engines, including buses, utility trucks, and construction vehicles such as dump trucks, paving equipment, demolition equipment, bulldozers, backhoes, front-end loaders, cranes, lifts and cement mixers.

"These vehicles are everywhere in our neighborhoods. Within a half mile of my house in Roxbury, there are several construction sites, the Water & Sewer Commission parking garage, several trash transfer stations, fire stations, a school bus parking lot, and construction equipment rental companies," said **Whitney Ogbesoyen**, a REEP alum and campaign leader.



Suffolk County has the greatest average lifetime cancer risk from diesel soot in the state and region, ranking in the top one percent of counties in the US (**41st of 3,109**) - a risk 309 times greater than what the EPA considers acceptable. Chronic illnesses are common, including asthma, high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes - **all aggravated by diesel exhaust exposure**.

Diesel pollution exacerbates inequality: Communities of color **consistently experience higher rates** of disability, mortality and reduced quality of life due to diesel pollution. Blacks are **three times more likely than whites** to die of asthma-related issues, and black children have an alarming **500 percent higher death rate** from asthma than white children. Diesel emissions, poor air quality, and associated cardiovascular and respiratory health problems affect environmental justice, **public health**, climate change and **workers' rights**.

"Roxbury, a low-income community, has six times the asthma rate of Massachusetts. It really shows that asthma is a problem - this is extremely high and it's also high in other communities of color," said Whitney. "We have a lot of schools in our district and people miss work and school because of asthma. We shouldn't have this problem if we have a way to fix it."



Cleaning up diesel pollution leads to longer lives and also makes economic sense. While healthcare and other impacts of diesel soot cost as much as $139 billion in 2010, every dollar spent on retrofit

technology result in $13 of health benefits. Black soot, a component of diesel emissions is an extremely potent climate change pollutant, and the United States emits more black carbon per capita than any other nation.

"Diesel emissions cause serious health problems and significantly contribute to climate change," said Elizabeth Saunders, Massachusetts Director for Clean Water Action. "With pollution controls well vetted and widely available, uncontrolled diesel emissions have no place in a modern city."



"This ordinance will mean fewer toxic air particulates in our neighborhoods and fewer visits to the emergency room. We value the efforts of this administration in prioritizing a tried and tested solution to health and climate issues," said Staci Rubin, ACE Senior Attorney.

"After DERO is signed, we're going to keep track of it and make sure it's actually implemented," said Dacia. "I'm not going to put in all that work for nothing. We can look at the results with AirBeat - our air monitoring station in Dudley Square. Hospital rates are going to go down and asthma attacks are going to go down."



Thank you members for supporting this work for cleaner, healthier air!

We also thank **Boston Children's Hospital and the Center for Collaborative Community Research** for their financial support of our campaign and our academic allies at **Tufts University** to bring DERO across the finish line.

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DERO History

In 1996, REEP was working with classrooms at the Phyllis Wheatley Middle School. The students were learning about environmental justice and striving to create green space in Dudley Square. During that year, one of the students died of a severe asthma attack. This student was diagnosed with asthma as an infant and lived near the MBTA's Bartlett Bus Yard located on Washington Street. His death opened our eyes to the problem of air pollution in Roxbury and caused us to begin working to stop dirty diesel emissions and prevent asthma.



The following year, REEP students from the Phyllis Wheatley, Timilty, Nathan Hale Elementary, Community Academy and Greater Egleston High Schools organized an Anti-Idling March from Egleston Square along Washington Street to Dudley Station. Students ticketed city, state and MBTA diesel vehicles that were breaking the idling law, including buses at Bartlett Yard.

In 1998, we created the Clean Buses for Boston Coalition to fight for healthier air by focusing on the MBTA. Through the coalition's work, we convinced the MBTA to order 350 compressed natural gas (CNG) buses in 2001 and another 100 cleaner fuel buses in 2002. Today, this work has transformed the entire MBTA bus fleet to run on CNG or with diesel engines that filter out 90 percent of emissions.



Another result of the Anti-Idling March came in 2002, when the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a violation notice to the MBTA for excessive idling at four bus yards, including Bartlett Yard. In 2004, the MBTA settled with the EPA and agreed to fully follow the idling law.

In 2005, Bartlett Yard closed for good and we continued to push for diesel emissions reduction in Boston. In 2009, ACE, with support from Clean Water Action, helped direct stimulus funds to retrofit 72 garbage trucks owned by Capitol Waste Services, Boston's main garbage hauler.

In the 2010 to 2011 school year, we drafted the first version of the ordinance, kicked off our DERO campaign and met with city officials, the Boston Public Health Commission and then-Representative Marty Walsh. We held DERO hearings at City Hall in 2011 and 2012, and creative actions to push for the ordinance in 2013. We launched our Air Quality Team in 2014 to continue this asthma and diesel work.



In the past year, our Air Quality Team members created an air quality survey and collected responses from Roxbury residents.

Of the respondents, 58 percent reported that Dudley Station was a location where they had more difficulty breathing.

Seventy percent of respondents state that primary sources of neighborhood air pollution are construction sites and equipment. One hundred percent of respondents are aware of development projects in the neighborhood and perceive that construction activity impacts local air quality.

Recently, we partnered with Tufts University to measure and analyze fine and ultrafine particles during construction of two municipal redevelopment projects in Dudley Square to understand the potential health impacts on our neighborhood. Data was collected from the Ferdinand, now Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building (from July to November 2012), and the old B2 police station demolition (November 2014).



Results show significantly elevated levels of particles during high-intensity construction days compared to low-intensity construction days, which suggests a need for emission control strategies. A big thank you to our academic allies from Tufts University for their contributions to the campaign: Dr. Doug Brugge, Dr. John Durant and Hanaa Rohman.

DERO is the next step in our work to improve air quality in Roxbury and other environmental justice communities.

The ordinance was **sponsored by Boston City Councilor Stephen Murphy** and unanimously passed by the City Council on May 13, 2015.