



Connecticut School Transportation Association

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Statement by  
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Before the  
Environment Committee  
March 4, 2009

*Raised S.B. No. 1019  
An Act Requiring Biodiesel-Blended Heating Oil and Diesel Fuel*

Sen. Meyer, Representative Roy, Honorable Members of the Environment Committee:

My name is William D. Moore. I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut School Transportation Association – COSTA. COSTA is a trade association comprised of owners and operators of school buses, student transportation vehicles and other associate members. Our membership of more than 125 companies and Boards of Education includes nearly all of the providers of student transportation in Connecticut. Together, they operate more than 10,000 school buses and Student Transportation Vehicles that transport more than 490,000 children to and from school safely every day.

I am appearing before you today regarding Raised S.B. No. 1019, *An Act Requiring Biodiesel-Blended Heating Oil and Diesel Fuel*.

COSTA has concerns about this bill, specifically the mandate that all diesel be a minimum of 2% biodiesel blend as of January 1, 2010 and increase to at least 5% biodiesel blend by January 1, 2013. We are concerned for several reasons.

Biodiesel has been proven to be a poor fuel for school buses, causing major disruptions with fleet operations. Even a two percent biodiesel fuel does not stand up well to cold weather. In fact, in 2005, Minnesota suspended the mandatory use of a two percent blend of biodiesel due to significant problems with the fuel and the filter systems. More recently, according to the January 16, 2009 Minneapolis - St. Paul *Star Tribune*, all schools in the Bloomington School District were closed because school buses with the mandated 2% biodiesel blend could not

operate in the 10° weather. It is not uncommon for the temperature to get that cold and colder in Connecticut for sustained periods in the winter.

School systems will suffer through repeated delayed openings and school cancellations if the school buses will not start due to gelling of biodiesel fuel during colder weather, particularly when temperatures drop below 20°F.

School bus manufacturers provide only limited warranty services for diesel-powered vehicles that run on biodiesel blends. Should there be an engine failure, who will be responsible for the repair once the warranty is voided? The local school district will have to pay for the repairs.

The quality of biodiesel varies significantly from manufacturer to manufacturer. More importantly, there are no major biodiesel manufacturers, and there is no real distribution network in place in order to deliver the biodiesel blend. We are uncertain of the availability and cost of biodiesel and how those costs will affect local Board of Education budgets.

Given these concerns, we respectfully request that school buses be exempted from the bill until biodiesel is a more proven technology.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you on this matter. I will be happy to respond to any questions that you might have.