



## ENERGY/AIR QUALITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

May 12, 2009

Isiah Leggett  
County Executive  
Office of the County Executive  
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Mr. Leggett:

In November, 2008, the Energy and Air Quality Advisory Committee (EAQAC) sent you a letter on the issue of vehicle idling. Our recommendations were twofold: (1) initiate an education campaign focused on posting anti-idling signs at key locations throughout the County; and (2) enforce the existing state anti-idling law. You responded to our letter on December 18, 2008, and informed us of on-going activities with County departments to reduce vehicle idling.

Over the past few months, EAQAC representatives have been meeting with County Officials to better understand how County departments address vehicle idling. Specifically, we met or spoke with representatives from the following departments:

- Fleet Management Services
- Police Department
- Highway Services
- Ride-On

Our goal was to determine how well the County limits vehicle idling through policies, incentives, and enforcement actions. We found that County officials have done an excellent job with policy directives aimed at reducing vehicle idling. Every department we spoke to informed us of their anti-idling policy. Some of the anti-idling policies, particularly the Department of Transportation, are very thorough and well written. We found evidence of some education. For example, Fleet Services created and posted no-idling signs at their fueling stations and Ride-On created and posted no-idling decals above the bus driver's seat. On the issue of monitoring vehicles to determine compliance with anti-idling policies, Ride-On informed us of their "street coordinators" that check on bus operators at depots. On the issue of enforcement, however, we found no evidence of County officials enforcing the Maryland state law prohibiting vehicle idling.

Per your recommendation to work together and expand current County efforts, we offer two recommendations for your consideration and approval. We recommend that EAQAC work with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to implement

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### Department of Environmental Protection

these two recommendations. First, we would physically survey parts of the County to identify high idling zones on County owned property (i.e., areas where vehicles are found to be idling in excess of the State law). Then, working with the Department of Public Works, we would deploy anti-idling signs at some of these locations. The creation and posting of the signs would incur a cost, and we estimate that the cost per sign is about \$140<sup>1</sup>. An alternative to this approach is to solicit sponsors of the signs from local businesses, where the signs can be designed by schools. As a pilot program, the number of signs deployed would be limited. Once we determine the ideal locations for placement, we will have a more precise idea of costs.

The second phase complements the first part. Working with the County DEP and Police Department, we would initiate an enforcement campaign aimed at the high idling zones where signs are posted. The enforcement campaign would begin with enforcement officials issuing warning tickets to those vehicle operators violating the state anti-idling law. This initial pre-enforcement "warning" campaign would take place over the course of 1-2 weeks. After this period, law enforcement officials would actually enforce the anti-idling law, per the law's enforcement provisions. The actual enforcement effort would occur subsequent to the warning period and last another 1-2 weeks. After the enforcement period ends, EAQAC and DEP would monitor the high idling zones to determine if vehicles are in compliance with the anti-idling law. If vehicles are generally in compliance we can expand the two-phase program to other areas. If the vehicles are generally not in compliance we would recommend engaging in more active enforcement.

We believe these recommendations will assist the County government and citizens in reducing harmful air emissions and conserving fuel. We look forward to your response, and if you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



David Faerberg, Chair  
Energy and Air Quality Committee

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<sup>1</sup> Estimates of the costs of no-idling signs come from Fleet Management Services of the Department of General Services. This cost is for a sign that measures 24" x 48" and is based on a volume purchase. This cost does not reflect labor costs for installing the sign.