



# Idling Reduction Programs: *What Works?*

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Mothers & Others for Clean Air is a partnership of six leading environmental and public health organizations dedicated to improving air quality for all Georgians by educating the public about the negative health impacts of air pollution and engaging people in both individual change and public policy advocacy.



# Idling Programs

- What are common challenges?
- What are the range of strategies?
- What are “best practices”?
- What questions remain?



# Idling Programs: Challenges

- Industry opposition
- Cost of alternative technologies
- Modeling emissions reductions
- Coordinating efforts of different agencies and state and local authorities



# Idling Programs: Strategies

## Regulation

- State rules
  - At least 18 in place
  - Vary in scope (diesel only v. all vehicles, size of diesel vehicles) and exemptions
  - Georgia's draft rule (currently on hold) was the first to include off-road diesel
- Municipal Rules
  - Only a few in the southeast; otherwise common
  - Vary in scope, exemptions, time limit
  - Some tied to state rules, others not



# Idling Programs: Strategies

## Enforcement

- State rules
  - Some state, some local, some a combination
  - Type of state agency involved varies: health department, environmental protection, department of transportation, department of motor vehicles, state highway patrol
- Municipal Rules
  - Enforcement varies widely, from set times and locations for monitoring to no formal structure at all
  - Agency charged with enforcement varies: parking authority, local law enforcement

***With both state and local enforcement, fines vary widely as does the use of the funds collected (air quality, general fund, enforcement)***



# Idling Programs: Strategies

## Outreach

- Vary from very modest to extensive
  - Signage, signage, signage
  - Media campaigns
  - Incentives/disincentives
- Different approaches for different audiences
  - Required driver education courses for truck and bus drivers
  - Traffic alert signs for commuters



# Idling Programs: Best Practices

## New York City's experience

- Rule + stronger enforcement + outreach
- Target hotspots to make enforcement more effective
- Use messaging proven to reach most motorists—  
electronic traffic signs
- Strong partnerships: state, municipality, advocacy organizations, schools
- Short time limit, applies to most vehicles

*Believe cost savings and health effects are the most effective messages but this has not been measured in a systematic way*



# Idling Programs: Best Practices

## New Jersey's experience

- Both operators and property owners responsible
- Very broad scope— diesel and gasoline, few exemptions
- Short time limit (3 minutes with some exceptions) makes enforcement easier
- Both state and local enforcement targeting hotspots (warehouses, truck stops, stadiums, shopping centers)
- Education funded by EPA grant; signage is primary focus and readily available; media campaign
- Hotline for reporting offenders



# Idling Programs: New Effort

## Texas

- State law limited to heavy duty (14,000+ lbs.) and only nonattainment area in ozone season
- 5 minute limit (harder to enforce than 3?)
- Rely on local law enforcement of state law– only Dallas enforced it last year
- Advocates want it to include smaller trucks and function year-round
- Experiencing some push-back from trucking industry– loading and unloading
- Officers report people turning idlers turning off engines when they see them, indicating they know about the law
- Target warehouses and truck stops
- Hope to use information from complaint phone number to identify additional hotspot issues



Restricted Idling Signs on display at Faulk Central Library (above) and enlarged to show detail (left).



# Idling Programs: Conclusions

## **Carrot AND Stick** are needed

“Cyclists, who breathe deeply due to the physical exertion involved, suck in a lot of nasty fumes when they ride by idling cars, trucks and buses. If we had a 3-5 minute idling limit in Atlanta, cyclists who came across idling vehicles could go straight to the driver, remind them of the ordinance and ask them to shut off their vehicle. Yes, we can educate people on the negative impacts of idling vehicles, but education efforts don’t have any teeth without a strong rule on the books.”

-- Rebecca Serna, Executive Director  
Atlanta Bicycle Campaign

“As President of PEDS, I have no trouble asking bus drivers I come across to turn off their idling buses. I often come across a group of drivers standing around outside while their engines idle. I have zero success, however, getting drivers to turn off their engines. We need a law against idling that is easy for local officers to enforce.”

-- Sally Flocks  
President & CEO, PEDS



# Idling Programs: Best Practices

## Conclusions

- **Partnerships strengthen program:**
  - ❖ State environmental protection or health division
  - ❖ State and local law enforcement
  - ❖ Municipality
  - ❖ Advocacy and/or community groups
- **Enforcement is easier with:**
  - ❖ Financial incentives– enforcers keep the fines; state agencies can provide additional incentives/disincentives (Texas)
  - ❖ Focus on hotspots
  - ❖ Widespread education/outreach effort
  - ❖ Short time limit (3 minutes), applies to most vehicles
  - ❖ Consistency...? (entire state or region, states consistent with municipalities)



# Idling Programs: Remaining Questions

- **Evaluation:** How can we better gauge effectiveness and emissions reductions?
- **Messaging:** What messages are most effective and how are they best delivered?
- **Consistency:** Would idling reduction programs be more effective with greater consistency? If so, how do we achieve it?
- **Role of vehicle manufacturers:** What is their role in myth-busting? Education and training?

