Public transportation can be an effective way to reduce air pollution caused by automobiles. However, in order to maximize the air quality effects of mass transit, transit buses must be clean.

The exhaust from diesel buses contains over 40 toxic air contaminants, carcinogens, ozone smog-forming compounds, and fine particulate matter (“soot”). Exposure to fine particles is known to cause asthma attacks, heart attacks, lung cancer, strokes, and even premature deaths.

Fortunately, solutions are available to clean up diesel buses! Affordable and commercially available devices called “particulate filters” can eliminate over 90 percent of the soot from a diesel bus.

Particulate filters are already required on all brand new buses (model 2007 and newer) and can be installed on existing buses at a cost about 1/30th of a new bus.

WHERE DOES CTA AND PACE STAND?

While solutions are available to clean up these engines, unfortunately, the vast majority of buses operated by CTA and Pace in the Chicago metropolitan area do not make use of these pollution controls.

According to a 2007 study by the Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago, only 14% of CTA’s bus fleet has pollution controls to reduce soot emissions by 90 percent. None of Pace’s buses are equipped with such emission control technology. In contrast, the entire transit bus fleets in Boston and New York City have been replaced with cleaner vehicles or retrofitted with advanced emission control technology.

Contact the CTA and PACE today and urge them to clean up their dirty buses!!

For more information about transit bus pollution or the Illinois Campaign to Clean Up Diesel Pollution, please contact Ashley Collins, Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago, at 312-628-0202 or Emily Stuart, Citizen Action/Illinois, at 312-427-2114 ext. 207.

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