



The State of New Hampshire
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES



Thomas S. Burack, Commissioner

January 12, 2010

The Honorable Emma Rous, Chairman
N.H. House of Representatives
Education Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 207
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Re: HB 1265 – An act requiring school boards to develop a policy to address air quality issues in schools.

Dear Chairman Rous and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on behalf of the Department of Environmental Services (DES) on HB 1265, which seeks to address the impact of vehicle emissions on air quality at New Hampshire public schools. DES understands that good air quality is critical to maintaining optimum learning, and we work diligently with our partners to assist schools in reducing the impact of vehicle emissions in school environments.

In New Hampshire, over 200,000 students and 20,000 teachers and staff (1 out of 6 residents) spend most of their day at school. Today, almost every student and staff member arrives at school in a car, truck or bus, each of which releases harmful emissions directly into the surrounding air. Students and staff at schools are often not only impacted by these harmful emissions in the outdoor air, but also indoors when pollutants are drawn inside through the school's ventilation system. Children are especially susceptible to health impacts from vehicle exhaust emissions. Children breathe 50 percent more air per pound of body weight than adults, and their respiratory systems are not yet fully developed. In addition, idling vehicles emit harmful pollutants directly into the breathing zones of children.

DES has numerous voluntary programs to assist schools in addressing vehicle emissions, including programs to minimize school bus and automobile idling, programs to improve school bus emissions controls, programs to encourage the use of cleaner burning fuels and programs to promote separating vehicles from ventilation system intakes. We feel that by requiring schools to establish a vehicle emissions reduction policy, enactment of this bill will encourage schools to make use of these programs and services. DES is committed to a safe and healthy environment for all of the State's citizens, and supports this legislation.

Thank you again for the opportunity to offer our support for HB 1265. Please contact Richard G. Rumba, Administrator of the Environmental Health Section, at 271-1987 if you have any questions or would like further information.

Sincerely,

Thomas S. Burack
Commissioner

cc: Rep. C. Beck
Senator M. Hassan
Senator M. Kelly