

October 3, 2018

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's
Texas Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Program
P.O. Box 13087
Austin, TX 78711-3087

Commissioners Bryan W. Shaw, Toby Baker, and Jon Nierman

RE: Texas Should Use the Environmental Mitigation Trust Funds to Purchase
Electric School Buses

To whom it may concern:

My name is Maria Johnson and I have lived in Texas for over 30 years. My husband and I are both healthcare professionals and know the dangers posed by diesel emissions. We have a lovely daughter who is about to enter the school system and I fear for her health knowing that she is likely going to have to ride on diesel school buses that are likely more than 10 years old and being exposed to all of the harmful emissions. It has been shown by countless studies that children are exposed to higher levels of diesel emission riding on school buses than are found in the surrounding environment. An epidemiology study conducted by the University of Michigan on the effects of switching from high sulfur diesel to low sulfur diesel showed that school attendance increase and children had few incidents of respiratory illness¹.

The EPA has never determined any safe level of diesel emission exposure for children. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the World Health Organization have listed diesel pollution as a class 1 carcinogen. Diesel emissions contain fine and ultra-fine particulate matter which can enter a child's airways and blood stream causing damage to internal organs like your liver, heart and lungs. Asthma rates among children are at alarming rates due to air pollution. The nitrogen oxides emitted help to create low level ozone formation which exacerbates respiratory illness.

¹ Adopting Clean Fuels and Technologies on School Buses: Pollution and Health Impacts on Children. Author Sara Adler and published on April 9, 2015. <http://electricschoolbuscampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Adopting-Clean-Fuels-and-Technologies-on-School-Buses-Pollution-and-Health-Impacts-on-Children.pdf>

In 2014, your own data shows that 52% of all of the NOx emissions in Texas was caused by mobile sources such as school buses². Mobile sources also account for 58% NOx in San Antonio³, 78% of NOx in Dallas-Fort Worth⁴, 67% of the NOx emissions in the Houston-Galveston area⁵, and 79% of NOx in the El Paso area⁶. The VW Settlement is designated to help each state to reduce it's NOx emissions and I feel that a large as much of the over \$200 million should be put towards lowering emissions from mobile source especially school buses.

We need to quickly end our reliance on fossil fuels to power our lives and vehicles. Texas has been doing a great job at greening our power supply with wind farms and solar. Now it is time to address the vehicle sector more aggressively. Texas is the second largest market for school buses in the United States and we need to set a good example for the rest of the nation. California has hundreds of electric school buses on their roads today and I have heard of none in Texas.

We have all felt the effects of climate change here in Texas. I was not badly affected by Hurricane Harvey in 2017 but I have friends and loved ones who lost everything. I have been following the discussion about building a seawall to protect refineries from the effects of climate change⁷. If the government is willing to spend an estimated \$12 billion to protect the oil industry and the public from the effects of our past actions then we should be willing to spend a few hundred million to prevent a worse future by reducing our emissions.

I also encourage you to read the New York League of Conservation Voters white paper on electric school buses "[New School Year, Same Dirty Buses: The Case for Electrifying New York's School Buses](#)," published September 24, 2018⁸. Although it focuses on New York, a lot of the information is universally applicable.

Sincerely,

Maria Johnson

² <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/airquality/areasource/emissions-sources-charts/2011texasNOXemissions/view>

³ <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/airquality/areasource/emissions-sources-charts/2011satNOXemissions/view>

⁴ <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/airquality/areasource/emissions-sources-charts/2011dfwNOXemissions/view>

⁵ <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/airquality/areasource/emissions-sources-charts/2011hgbNOXemissions/view>

⁶ <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/airquality/areasource/emissions-sources-charts/2011elpNOXemissions/view>

⁷ <https://www.oregonlive.com/expo/news/erry-2018/08/88ce31f2fa4310/oil-industry-wants-government.html>

⁸ http://nylcvef.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/ESB_WhitePaper.pdf