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ANTI-IDLING ACT

Personal Presentation

Law Amendments Committee

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Good afternoon, Before I get too far into my brief presentation, I should mention that I am Mr. Epstein's Constituency Assistant. I think it's important to get that out front. I am, however, here as a private citizen, one who has done a great deal of work around unnecessary vehicle idling in Nova Scotia for both ACAP Cape Breton, a great, hardworking organization located in the Constituency of the honourable member from CB South, Mr. MacDonald and the Ecology Action Centre here in Halifax.

I'd like to begin by thanking the committee for the opportunity to share my thoughts on this topic, it is very important to me and to many Nova Scotians. I have reviewed the bill and the debate that occurred on Monday and Tuesday. I appreciate the arguments from both sides. I am not too inclined to see this bill die for lack of teeth, which seems to be the main criticism, but nor would I like to see it brought into law as it is.

From Clean Nova Scotia to the Children's Clean Air Network, there has been much success with idle-free campaigns targeting consumers, schools, businesses and fleets.

The government has shown great leadership in introducing this bill, the first provincial legislation in Canada. It is an important step to reducing greenhouse gases from the Transportation sector which is responsible for over 28% of Nova Scotia's total greenhouse gas emissions. It is also a significant step in reducing pollutants affecting human health, particularly the health of those in high-risk groups. An important practical benefit of reduced idling is fuel savings.

I'd like to share a few quick facts and make some suggested amendments to improve the act. Idling reductions have a simple consequence: a reduction in wasteful fuel consumption.

Reduced fuel consumption means reduced emissions. Vehicle exhaust or tailpipe emissions generate two categories of emissions: Greenhouse Gases and Ground Level Air Pollutants. Greenhouse gases contribute to Climate Change and Air Pollutants have an adverse effect on human health.

CLIMATE CHANGE

There is a simple, direct relationship between fuel consumption and GHG emissions. For every litre of gasoline consumed by a car, 2.3 Kg of CO₂e emissions are generated. For diesel that number of 2.7 Kg. On average, the gasoline/diesel light-duty vehicle fleet (all light-duty vehicles including personal vehicles) generate an average of 2.4 Kg of CO₂e per litre of fuel consumed.

The City of Toronto identified a potential GHG reduction of almost 2.2 kilotonnes per year by simply ensuring vehicle operators follow the 10 second rule. If the vehicle you are driving will be stopped,

outside of traffic, for more than 10 seconds then you should turn the engine off and restart when prepared to resume driving. This rule is at the heart of idling reduction campaigns, policies and laws.

HUMAN HEALTH

Idling reductions are good for human health. Vehicle exhaust contains VOCs, Nox and Sox, CO and particulate matter. All of which are linked to health problems. Idling vehicles have a greater impact on human health because exhaust lingers, while exhaust from a moving vehicle dissipates more quickly.

Children, people with breathing challenges, physically disabled persons in wheelchairs and senior citizens are among high-risk groups. Hot Spots are areas where people are inclined to idle unnecessarily, unnecessary idling is idling outside of traffic (where for efficient flow of traffic and safety idling is required) or when the engine must be running for operation of equipment. Examples include:

- Schools - parents waiting to pick-up children
- Businesses - passenger pick-up, parcel pick-up, etc
- Places of worship
- Banks and ATMs
- Drive-Thrus
- Bus Stops

Idling buses and light-duty vehicles at schools generate significant emissions which has been proven to have a detrimental effect on health. For this reason, I applaud the move to include school buses as a priority vehicle class. This is a prime example of targeting idling hot-spots.

BACK TO BALANCE

The average Canadian can reduce their fuel consumption by 3% by simply reducing idling by 10 minutes/day. Fleet vehicle operators are much more likely to allow their vehicle to idle.

As the Government engages in an Expenditure Management Review as part of the Back to Balance effort; we can not neglect to address the potential cost savings associated with a Provincial fleet policy. The City of Hamilton Ontario saved \$300,000 in one year from their idling reduction efforts and believe, with enhanced enforcement and education, they could increase those savings to as high as \$2-3 million annually. In the City of Toronto example I mentioned earlier, assuming an average fuel price of \$1/litre, their effort would result in an estimated cost savings of over \$900,000.

Simply expanding the scope of this legislation to include all vehicles in the Provincial Fleet would contribute significant savings without program or budget cuts.

IDLING REDUCTION EFFORTS

Research by NRCan indicates that the best outcomes are a result of a mix of education and enforcement of regulations.

The government could improve the outcomes from this Act by expanding education programs like DriveWiser and FleetWiser. An education component leading up to the October 1, 2011 deadline for policy development is also essential.

Enforcement is necessary. Penalties should be included for commercial operators who fail to develop and implement idling reduction policy, there must also be a mechanism for ensuring the policies are properly enforced. It is not usually difficult to force people to save money.

PROVINCIAL FLEET

Management buy-in and leadership within the civil service is essential. Partnerships with ENGOs could result in effective training for fleet vehicle operators, managers and senior department staff. Buy-in amidst the Expenditure Management Review process would likely be higher, especially among senior civil servants as it presents potential cost savings through increased efficiency instead of program cuts or budget cuts.

AMENDMENTS

Acknowledging the need for broader legislation, I have tried to remain within the scope of this Act in developing what I hope you will see as practical suggestions for improving it while laying the ground work for additional work on this important issue.

My suggestions, remaining within the current timeline – policies by October 1, 2011, are as follows:

1. Include in this bill a commitment that the provincial fleet (including smaller vehicles - cars, vans and light-duty trucks and heavy equipment) will move to eliminate unnecessary idling within the same time frame by adopting the 10 second rule.
2. Broaden the scope of the bill to include all commercial passenger vehicles - mini-vans used as shuttles and passenger vans used to transport smaller groups (12 - 15 passenger vans, etc).
3. Commit to researching and developing an enhanced program within the same timeframe that provides for idling reduction education, regulation and enforcement for personal vehicles.
4. The act should require that the Department of Environment engage in an education and awareness campaign to assist, prepare and encourage operators to change their habits in the time leading up to the deadline.
5. Provincial Fleet Managers across all departments should investigate technologies to assist in monitoring and enforcement of policy. Where technology is in place, plans to deploy the technology should be integrated into policy. Where technology is available but not in place, Managers should assess the feasibility of and if appropriate provide plans for deployment.
6. Penalties, in the form of a fines, should be put in place for those who fail to provide a written policy that includes plans for enforcement to the Province by the October 2011 deadline. In the case of regulated commercial operators the development, implementation and enforcement of the policy should be a requirement of licensing as of October 1, 2011.