



North Carolina Pupil Transportation Association

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School Bus Diesel Fuel Funding June 25, 2008

The North Carolina Pupil Transportation Association (NCPTA) and its member school districts in conjunction with the North Carolina Association of School Administrators (NCASA), and the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) jointly desire the North Carolina General Assembly to fully fund diesel fuel purchases for North Carolina Public School Buses.

During the 2007-2008 school year our average statewide price for diesel fuel was \$2.95 per gallon of which the state funded \$2.85 per gallon to school districts with a 100% budget rating. That left the school districts having to secure funding for the excess costs. With current diesel prices hovering around \$4.00 per gallon we can expect fuel budgets to increase by 30% on average across the state.

Since 1991 school districts across North Carolina have strived to operate efficient pupil transportation operations. Districts choosing to enhance service levels over state standards have been penalized through transportation allotments. In 2005 the State Board of Education along with all Local Board's of Education enacted policies to reduce idling on school and activity buses. In addition several school districts have explored additional ways to conserve fuel and or funding through technologies such as global positioning systems, bio-diesel, and route optimizations.

If the North Carolina General Assembly funds public school buses an additional \$30 million for FY 2008-2009 our estimates equate that to about a \$1 per gallon shortfall providing diesel fuel prices continue to average \$4 for each gallon. This shortfall will increase exponentially if the market dictates higher fuel prices. With other proposed cuts to public education it is doubtful that local school districts will have the resources to fund the additional diesel costs without negative impacts to service levels. In addition this can translate to a decrease in instructional levels that our children deserve in their educational learning.

The NCPTA will continue to strive for the most efficient ways to assist the North Carolina General Assembly with saving funds wherever possible. It is our position that diesel fuel, unfortunately, is an area where we can't afford not to fully fund public education. Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.