

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



July 31, 2012

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The Honorable Lisa P. Jackson
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Administrator Jackson:

The Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC) appreciates the opportunity to work with you and the US EPA on a wide range of issues of interest and concern to local governments. More specifically, the Committee is particularly grateful to have the opportunity to comment on the Heavy-Duty Highway Program: Revisions for Emergency Vehicles (aka the Fire Truck Rule) and the proposed Heavy-Duty Highway Program: Revisions for Emergency Vehicles and SCR Maintenance, signed by you on May 23, 2012. The LGAC has reviewed and considered the proposed changes. Pursuant to the Committee's charter, we offer the following comments regarding emergency vehicles and SCR maintenance as part of the Heavy-Duty Highway Program.

The LGAC acknowledges and appreciates EPA's attempt to expedite the revisions related to emergency vehicles through a direct final rule. By taking additional steps so that emergency vehicle manufacturers and engine manufacturers have the option to further reduce the severity or eliminate altogether any performance related maintenance inducements that are or could be implemented on emergency vehicles, EPA will help our communities' emergency vehicles respond quickly and safely to emergencies, thus better ensuring public safety and welfare and the protection of lives and property. This flexibility for emergency vehicles is necessary due to their extreme duty cycles and their importance to ensuring the health and safety of our communities. Additionally, the LGAC appreciates that this rule is *entirely* voluntary for both new and in-use engines; requiring local governments to install retrofit technologies on existing vehicles would be a huge burden in these times of limited economic resources. The LGAC appreciates EPA's encouragement and flexibility for manufacturers to develop a range of solutions, including solutions that are low- or even no-cost.

The rule defines an *emergency vehicle* as "an ambulance or a fire truck." The rule states that "EPA's intent is to include vehicles that are purpose-built and exclusively dedicated to firefighting, emergency/rescue medical transport, and/or performing other rescue or emergency personnel or equipment

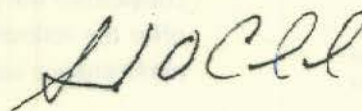
transport functions related to saving lives and reducing injuries coincident with fires and other hazardous situations." While the intent sounds fairly broad, the definition of an emergency vehicle as either an ambulance or fire truck *only* is limited. Local governments and communities rely on many other types of emergency vehicles with diesel engines. For example, the City of Ithaca, New York employs a SWAT truck for emergency situations as a mobile command unit, coordinating police, fire personnel, and emergency medical technicians on the scene; the truck also carries vital equipment for handling emergencies. Under the rule's definition, the SWAT truck is not an emergency vehicle. Due to the importance of trucks like these in protecting our communities, the LGAC recommends that the definition of *emergency equipment* be expanded to include vehicles dedicated to law enforcement operations and civilian rescue. However, the LGAC supports the DFR as published and appreciates EPA's attempts at expediency.

EPA's proposed action regarding nonroad equipment to allow short-term relief from emissions standards *only* when such equipment is needed to respond to an emergency such as a flood or hurricane – i.e., *when human health and safety is at risk* – so that any pre-set emissions for engine protection measures do not prevent the equipment from performing *life-saving work*, is important in helping localities respond to emergencies quickly and effectively. It is an important distinction that this short-term relief from emissions standards is *only* applicable during emergency response; this ensures the air quality of our localities is not significantly decreased by requiring these nonroad engines to meet emissions standards during normal service.

Sincerely,



Mayor Heather McTeer
Chair, LGAC



Supervisor Salud Carbajal
Chair, Air, Climate & Energy Workgroup