



CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL LAW ASSOCIATION
L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DU DROIT DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT

The Honourable Dalton McGuinty
Premier of Ontario
Room 281, Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A1

July 10, 2009

Dear Premier McGuinty,

Re: Ensuring Public Transit Does Not Create Health Hazards from Excessive Diesel Exhaust

We write today as enthusiastic supporters of your government's initiatives that are expanding public transit. However, we are dismayed over the preferred choice of diesel trains for the Metrolinx Georgetown South Service Expansion and Union-Pearson Rail Link (GSSE/UPRL).

Diesel exhaust, as a mixture, is identified as a probable human carcinogen by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC). Individual components, such as benzene, formaldehyde and several toxic metals are IARC-classified as known human carcinogens. Diesel exhaust is also associated with childhood leukemia. The fine particles it contains contribute to urban smog and air pollution. Strong scientific evidence associates fine particulate air pollution with multiple respiratory and cardiovascular health effects in adults and respiratory effects in children up to and including loss of life in the elderly and overall shortened lifespan as well as lifelong deficits in lung function when damage occurs during lung development.

Diesel fuel is a very poor choice for a massive expansion of public transit in urban areas where air quality is already known to be compromised. The Ontario Medical Association has repeatedly shown that there are massive health-care costs in Ontario from air pollution, especially from fine particulate matter. It simply does not make sense for your government to make large investments in infrastructure that will use diesel fuel over the long term and further compromise human health and needlessly add very high costs to Ontario's health care system. We urge you to reject the diesel fuel alternative for the Metrolinx GSSE/UPRL and insist on the use of electricity instead.

Yours very truly,

CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL LAW ASSOCIATION

Theresa McClenaghan
Executive Director and Counsel (CELA Publication No. 658)

c.c. **Hon. George Smitherman**, Minister of Energy and Infrastructure; **Hon. John Gerretsen**, Minister of the Environment; **Hon. David Caplan**, Minister of Health and Long Term Care; **Hon. James Bradley**, Minister of Transportation; **Mr. Robert Pritchard**, President and CEO, Metrolinx; **Ms Lin Grist**, Clean Train Coalition