

9/21/07 Press Release from the Kings Park Civic Association

Diesel emissions from public school buses include substances that are listed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as hazardous air pollutants. Diesel exhaust affects all of our residents, but young children, whose lungs are still developing, are more susceptible to the numerous toxic chemicals and soot found in the particulates produced by diesel emissions. These particulates are known to cause cancer, asthma and other health problems in children and adults. Researchers have even determined that the air inside these school buses contains more toxic pollution than the air on the outside.

At the Kings Park Civic Association's September membership meeting, two guest speakers spoke about the harmful effects diesel exhaust can have on our communities. Our guest speakers emphasized to us that the use of cleaner alternative fuels, such as compressed natural gas (CNG), is not only safer but also more affordable. Smithtown's Director of Environment and Waterways, Russell Barnett, began the presentation by explaining to the KPCA membership, Kings Park School Board member Marie Goldstein and Kings Park School District Transportation Supervisor, Mike DeMaise, why Smithtown decided to convert their entire diesel sanitation truck fleet to a CNG operation in only seven months. He stated that the environmental and financial benefits of this fleet conversion are substantial and believes converting the school district's diesel buses to CNG would provide additional benefits to the community, both fiscally and environmentally. Our second guest speaker, Ira Dorfman, from Emission Solutions, Inc. (ESI) explained to the group how his company could retrofit the existing Kings Park school bus fleet with new CNG engines. Ira and Russell also stressed that state and federal grants could pay for most of the transition costs, including the cost of building a CNG refueling station. They also reminded us, that today, CNG is the better alternative to diesel, not only for its environmental and financial benefits, but because 98% of the natural gas we consume in the United States comes from North American sources. Currently, we import over 60% of our oil needs, much of it from hostile nations.

The KPCA would like to thank Russell Barnett and Ira Dorfman for all the time and effort they put into their presentation. We were all thoroughly impressed with the information they provided to us and are hopeful that the Kings Park School District will seriously consider their suggestions and recommendations.

The Kings Park Civic Association supports efforts to eliminate toxic diesel emissions from all public vehicles. Supporting such initiatives will help decrease our country's dependence on expensive foreign oil, improve our environment, reduce our children's exposure to hazardous pollutants and reduce our tax burden. To achieve these goals, we must be willing to work together and have the courage to make the changes necessary to improve the financial and environmental well being of our community.

Sincerely,

**Michael Rosato
President
Kings Park Civic Association**