

TESTIMONY BY WAYNE MICHAUD, BRISTOL, VT
BEFORE VERMONT HOUSE NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY COMMITTEE
RE: H.97--AN ACT RELATING TO THE IDLING OF MOTOR VEHICLES
FEBRUARY 3, 2009

I am Wayne Michaud of Bristol, director of Idle-Free VT, a grassroots campaign to raise awareness of unnecessary vehicle idling in Vermont. I am testifying for H.97--an act relating to the idling of motor vehicles.

Why should this bill pass and become law? Because for several compelling reasons we can and need to reduce idling when parked.

- **Idling affects our air quality and health.** Vehicle emissions, especially diesel emissions, contain harmful exhaust including nitrogen oxides, volatile organic chemicals and particulate matter. Dozens of studies link these exhausts to increased hospital admissions for respiratory disease and even premature death.

- **Idling contributes to global climate change.** While Vermont is overall the lowest carbon producing state in the U.S., the Governor's Commission on Climate Change has determined that on a per capita basis, Vermont's transportation greenhouse gas emissions are nearly double the U.S. average. And heavy-duty vehicle idling is higher proportionately in carbon emissions. By enacting H.97, Vermont can eliminate thousands of tons of carbon emissions that put our planet at peril.

[handout: Governor's Commission on Climate Change, page 44]

- **Idling wastes fuel.** Idling gets 0 miles per gallon. Entities like Green Mountain Coffee Roasters and UPS have idle-reduction policies for the operators of their medium and heavy-duty vehicle fleets that reduce or eliminate idling when parked. As a result, their engine control module data shows that significantly reducing runtime idling saves them thousands of dollars annually.

[UPS reference: <http://pressroom.ups.com/mediakits/factsheet/0,1889,1314,00.html>]

- **Idling causes needless engine wear.** The EPA and manufacturers of heavy-duty diesel motors alike warn operators to typically limit engine warm up to 3 to 5 minutes and to limit idling in general when possible.

Here's an excerpt by heavy-duty engine manufacturers from a May 1, 2008 article in Equipment Today Magazine titled, "Crack Down on Idle Time":

There are many misconceptions — mainly that turning the engine off and restarting it several times a day will increase wear. "Starting and stopping the engine is actually easier on the engine than prolonged idling," says Brian Lindgren, vocational sales director, Kenworth Truck Co. "It is a good idea to have a good set of batteries and a high-quality starter and alternator to ensure sufficient power to start the engine numerous times if it is not run long enough to recharge the batteries."

Mike Powers, product development manager for Caterpillar Global On-Highway, agrees, noting, "There is no additional wear when shutting the truck on/off several times a day. There are benefits in fuel economy and wear/durability when shutting the truck down rather than idling."

According to Christy Nycz, Cummins Inc., an idling engine in a Class 8 truck will consume roughly 1 gal./hour of fuel at 1,000 rpm and .5 gal./hour at 650 rpm.

“The fuel consumption depends on the application, load factor on the engine, etc.,” Powers adds. “It is very difficult to quantify exact savings. But if you decrease your idle time from 50% to 25%, it could improve your fuel economy by up to 4%.”

[handouts: “Crack Down on Idle Time” (Trucks & Transportation), Equipment Today Magazine, May 1, 2008 by Curt Bennink; “What You Should Know About Truck Engine Idling”, EPA New England, April 2002]

H.97 has written into it reasonable exemptions to restricted idling that allows operators of heavy-duty vehicles to idle as necessary to, for instance, adequately carry on commerce and for their safety.

Finally, with the enactment in 2007 of Act 48--the idling of motor vehicle engines on school property, Vermont began to address the issue of the harm and waste caused by unnecessary vehicle idling. It is now past time for Vermont to take the next step by enacting a 10,000 pound idling law. I say “past time” because, as of Feb. 9, 2009 with Pennsylvania’s new law taking effect, every other northeast state has already enacted this type of law.

[handout: ATRI (American Transportation Research Institute) Compendium of Idling Regulations (January 2009)]