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**NEW PROJECT WILL REDUCE SCHOOL BUS EMISSIONS;
AIMS TO HELP PROTECT KIDS' HEALTH**

ST. PAUL, Minn. – **Project Green Fleet**, a partnership of Minnesota businesses, government agencies, and non-profit organizations, is a new initiative to reduce the pollution emitted by at least 500 buses in the state, thereby improving the quality of the air our children breathe. Pollution levels inside school buses can be up to five times higher than outdoor air.

“Our partners know that proactive and voluntary action to improve our environment is the right thing for Minnesota’s economy, environment and public health,” said Bill Droessler, director of Clean Air Minnesota, which is coordinating Project Green Fleet.

Project Green Fleet has already garnered the support of a number of organizations, including Flint Hills Resources, Rochester Public Utilities, Xcel Energy, Minnesota Power, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), and Donaldson Company, which makes the pollution-reduction technology to be used in the project. It will address the fact that more than half of Minnesota’s air pollution results from mobile sources, including cars, trucks and buses. Diesel-fueled vehicles – including school buses – emit the highest level of unhealthy pollutants, which can contribute to heart and lung diseases such as asthma and other problems.

“This project is unique in two ways: first, its proactive, wholly voluntary nature, and second, the public-private partnership that will make it work,” said Mike Harley, executive director of the Minnesota Environmental Initiative. The Minnesota Environmental Initiative works to build

partnerships that develop solutions to Minnesota's environmental concerns; Clean Air Minnesota is one of its programs.

Project Green Fleet will consist of three phases, the first of which will retrofit at least 500 Minnesota school buses with pollution control equipment by 2007, dramatically reducing the exposure to pollutants both inside and outside each bus. The second and third phases of Project Green Fleet will retrofit transit buses and other diesel fleets. These retrofits are one of the easiest, most cost-effective ways to make significant gains in pollution reduction. The overall goals are to:

- Reduce school children's exposure to air pollutants,
- Lower levels of air pollution statewide, and
- Contribute to the larger effort to prevent air pollution alerts in Minnesota.

"While national air quality standards have become stricter over the last few years, we need to go a step further," said Sheryl Corrigan, commissioner of the MPCA. "We still need to focus locally on reducing our children's exposure to the diesel particles that come out of the buses they ride to school each day. We need to reduce *all* of our exposure to these emissions."

More partners needed

To reach its goal of retrofitting 500 or more Minnesota school buses, Project Green Fleet must raise \$2 million from public and private sources. More than \$400,000 has already been raised from the current project partners.

"Flint Hills got involved in this project because it is a natural extension of our previous environmental efforts, and we look forward to continued involvement in efforts that will improve air quality," said David Robertson, chairman of the board of Flint Hills Resources. "For everyone who is not on board with Project Green Fleet yet, I encourage you to consider getting involved. This is a milestone project that calls for a large partnership of people who can make a difference."

Organizations interested in joining Project Green Fleet may contact Bill Droessler at 612/334-3388, ext. 103, or visit www.projectgreenfleet.org for more information.

About Clean Air Minnesota

Clean Air Minnesota (CAM), a program of the Minnesota Environmental Initiative, is a voluntary partnership of businesses, environmental groups, government agencies, and citizens working together to achieve significant, measurable reduction in air pollution. CAM's efforts focus primarily on creating and managing voluntary emission reduction projects and developing a broad base of partners to reach as many people as possible with air quality information.

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