

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**NESCAUM Welcomes Stricter Air Pollution Standards
for Locomotive and Marine Engines**

March 14, 2008 (Boston, MA) – Today, the United State Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a final rule to control air pollution from locomotive and marine engines. NESCAUM applauds EPA’s action to reduce emissions from these important and previously under-controlled air pollution sources.

These two categories of engines emit significant levels of fine particulates and ozone-forming pollutants. In the Northeast, these sources are responsible for about 10 percent of all mobile source-related emissions of fine particulates (soot) and of nitrogen oxides that contribute to ground-level ozone (smog) pollution. Absent this rule, that percentage was predicted to increase very significantly in the coming decades.

Not only do locomotive and marine diesel engines contribute to elevated regional levels of soot and smog, they can also cause high levels of localized pollution in the vicinity of ports and rail yards, which are often located in densely populated urban areas.

EPA’s final standards for newly manufactured locomotive engines will cut emissions of fine particle pollution by 90 percent and ozone-forming pollution by 80 percent, beginning in 2015. For marine engines, equivalent standards are required beginning in 2016. EPA’s new rule will also result in significant near term pollution reductions through the requirement that all remanufactured engines (both marine and locomotive) meet low emission standards beginning in 2008. Finally, the rule will require the installation of devices to greatly reduce idling of diesel locomotives, thus nearly eliminating the pollution associated with extended idling of switch engines and locomotives in rail yards.

Scientists have clearly established causal associations between fine particles and the aggravation of respiratory conditions such as asthma, cardiac conditions such as heart disease, and premature mortality. It has not been determined whether a threshold level exists below which health effects are undetectable.

Ground-level ozone is a powerful respiratory irritant. Exposure to elevated levels can reduce lung function, exacerbate asthma attacks, inflame and damage cells that line the lungs, and aggravate chronic cardio-pulmonary diseases. Health studies performed in the U.S. and Europe have independently and consistently found strong links between increases in ground-level ozone and the risk of premature death. Recent studies also indicate that ozone may contribute to heart problems. While fine particle and ozone are clear threats to those with respiratory disease, it can also affect healthy children and adults engaged in outdoor activities on smoggy days.

The availability of clean locomotive and marine engines will further enhance opportunities to reduce air pollution through modal shifts from highway passenger and freight movement to rail and water.

NESCAUM is the regional association of state air pollution control agencies representing Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

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