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**CONSTRUCTION, ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS REACH LANDMARK ACCORD,
CALL FOR DIESEL CLEANUP IN FEDERALLY-FUNDED HIGHWAY PROJECTS**

New Surface Transportation Legislation Should Allow State Contracting Officials to Require Reductions via Contract Change Orders that Cover 100 Percent of Costs to Retrofit Equipment

(Washington, D.C.) – Diesel smoke might soon be a thing of a past at big highway projects, under a landmark accord reached between major construction and environmental groups.

The Associated General Contractors of America and the non-profit Clean Air Task Force jointly called on Congress to give state officials both the authority and funding to require use of clean construction equipment at federally-funded transportation projects.

The two groups called for required reductions via contract change orders that cover 100 percent of the cost for contractors, following the award of a project to the lowest bidder.

“If the federal transportation program can connect a continent and unite a people, there’s no reason it can’t help protect our environment,” said Stephen E. Sandherr, chief executive officer of the Associated General Contractors of America. “This approach will reduce emissions without imposing crippling new costs that will hurt construction firms and their workers.”

The association joined CATF, which has been a leader in pressing for cleanup of diesel engines, in announcing a new set of “Clean Construction Principles” on which the two organizations agree. The groups called on Congress, which is reviewing transportation legislation, to authorize states to require diesel emissions reductions and cover the cost of retrofitting or repowering equipment manufactured to meet earlier emissions standards.

“We are thrilled to be standing side-by-side with the contractors on this,” said Conrad Schneider, CATF Advocacy Director. “This is a great opportunity to clean up many of the millions of older diesel engines still in use.”

Under the new principles, states would first require successful bidders for federally-funded transportation projects to identify the off-road diesel equipment they plan to use. After exploring EPA-approved options for reducing diesel emissions, states would issue change orders requiring contractors to pursue the best of those options. States would give priority to projects located in areas with poor air quality, and the change orders would entitle contractors to recover 100 percent of their costs.

Sandherr noted that the association and its chapters were investing up to \$7 million this year to reduce diesel emissions from construction equipment. He added that the construction of new and more efficient buildings, factories and transportation networks continues to be one of the most effective ways to protect the environment.

“You can’t wish for a greener future, you have to build it, and that’s exactly what our member companies are doing,” Sandherr said. [Click here for a copy of the “Clean Construction Principles.”](#)

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