



Our Children's Earth Foundation | 100 First Street, Suite 100-367, San Francisco, CA 94105

NEWS RELEASE

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NEW DOCUMENTS REVEAL MUNI HAS LOST \$1 MILLION FOR FAILING TO REPLACE OLD BUSES AND CLEAN UP DIRTY DIESEL FLEET

Public health coalition also criticizes MUNI for "viewpoint discrimination" in decision to censor proposed environmental education bus shelter advertisements

SAN FRANCISCO, California - MUNI's refusal to purchase alternative fuel buses and its failure to install pollution prevention traps on its existing fleet has cost San Francisco nearly \$1 million in regional air quality grants and threatens to create hundreds of thousands of dollars in additional funding cuts.

A coalition of public health, community and environmental groups gathered today in front of MUNI headquarters to call on MUNI General Manager Michael Burns to install the pollution traps and replace the old buses without delay. The groups also criticized MUNI's rejection of a bus shelter ad designed to educate riders about the health effects of the old diesel buses in the MUNI fleet.

"Instead of censoring ads they don't like, MUNI needs to take action to get these old dirty diesel buses off the streets," said Tiffany Schauer, Executive Director of Our Children's Earth. "By losing a million dollars because of an ideological resistance to alternative fuels, MUNI management has now shown that it is willing to put politics above the city budget, along with public health and the environment."

Newly revealed documents show that, over the past six weeks, MUNI has had a total of \$1 million in regional air quality grants terminated or frozen because of failure to move forward on the purchase of alternative fuels buses and to install pollution prevention traps on its existing fleet as agreed in the grant requirements. Other documents show that MUNI stands to lose thousands of dollars more in other funding in the coming months if it continues to fail to move forward with cleaning up S.F. buses.

The environmental group Our Children's Earth Foundation submitted an environmental education ad to MUNI's vendor last month that was to be displayed in MUNI bus shelters around San Francisco for \$800 per shelter ad. After conferring with MUNI staff, vendor Viacom Outdoor rejected the ad in a letter dated May 28th. OCE responded on June 12th with a letter from its attorney to MUNI General Manager Michael Burns appealing the censorship decision and outlining a challenge to its legality.

The censored ad, in the format of an FBI "Most Wanted" poster, displays pictures of some of the old buses in MUNI's current fleet, including a soot-belching 1984 Flyer, a 1988 and 1989 New Flyer and a 1990 Orion bus. The ad explains that "pollution from old, unhealthy diesel buses is known as a major contributor to asthma and lung cancer" and cites a recent study that found that 1 out of 3 of MUNI's diesel buses are past their "useful life" and should be immediately replaced. The ad also urges bus riders to call MUNI General Manager Burns with their concerns.

"MUNI is trying to gag criticism of its dirty diesel fleet because it doesn't want the public to know just how bad these buses really are," OCE's Schauer concluded. "Until MUNI installs the pollution traps and replaces the old diesels with new alternative fuels buses, it will continue to unnecessarily risk precious city funds and harm the air bus riders and other San Franciscans breathe every day."

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