



# NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 3, 2018

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## Illinois EPA Funds Cleaner Public Transportation for the Most Vulnerable Residents in the Chicago Area

### *First Round of Driving a Cleaner Illinois Program Funding Focuses on Public Transit in Environmental Justice Areas*

CHICAGO – Illinois EPA Director Alec Messina today announced awards for the first round of funding under the Driving a Cleaner Illinois Program. Approximately \$19 million in funding awards will go toward public transit projects benefitting the most vulnerable populations including low-income residents, minorities and children. The program was designed to improve air quality in the state primarily by removing old diesel engines from service. Illinois EPA opened the first round of funding for public transit projects in the Chicago Metropolitan area and an electric school bus pilot project in Cook County in late August. This funding opportunity is part of the State's allocation of \$108 million dollars received from the multi-billion-dollar Volkswagen Settlement after it was discovered Volkswagen installed emissions cheating software in certain diesel vehicles.

"Illinois EPA developed the first-round of funding to achieve significant nitrogen oxide (NOx) emission reductions for our most vulnerable residents," said Director Messina. "Environmental justice areas throughout the Chicago area will see real air quality improvements because of these projects."

"This funding will drive clean air benefits for the working families and children in the Chicago area," said Governor Bruce Rauner. "We're excited to see these first projects implemented to provide a cleaner commute for these residents."

The projects approved for funding under the first-round of Driving a Cleaner Illinois include the following three types of vehicle replacement projects and fuels:

- **New Cleaner Diesel Passenger/Commuter Locomotives.** Eight old diesel passenger/commuter trains will be replaced with new, Tier 4, cleaner diesel passenger/commuter trains. These new trains will travel through environmental justice areas as they transport passengers to and from Union Station.  
Recipient: Metra - \$14 million

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- **New Electric and Alternate Fuel Public Transit Buses.** Nine old diesel public transit buses will be replaced with six new compressed natural gas (CNG) and three new all-electric public transit buses. The all-electric public transit buses will transport passengers in the City of Chicago and will travel through environmental justice areas. The CNG buses will primarily operate out of Markham in Southern Cook County reaching job centers in Monee, Joliet, Lombard, Rosemont and Schaumburg.  
Recipients: Pace Suburban Bus Service - \$2.3 million  
Chicago Transit Authority - \$1.9 million
- **New Electric School Buses.** Three old diesel school buses will be replaced with three new all-electric school buses. One new all-electric school bus will service the Chicago Public School District and travel through environmental justice areas as it transports children to school on the west side of Chicago. The other two new all-electric school buses will carry children to schools in Richton Park and Chicago Heights, both of which are located in environmental justice areas and have significant minority and low-income student populations.  
Recipient: Cook-Illinois Corp - \$474,000  
First Student, Inc. - \$280,000

The Illinois EPA anticipates achieving approximately 290 tons of NOx reductions per year from these projects. Public transit commuters, children, environmental justice communities and the residents of Cook, DuPage, Kane and Will counties will be the beneficiaries of these significant NOx emission reductions in the form of air quality improvements.

The Illinois EPA's Volkswagen Settlement webpage contains additional information on the VW Settlement and the Driving a Cleaner Illinois Program.

<https://www2.illinois.gov/epa/topics/air-quality/vw-settlement/Pages/default.aspx>.

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