

News From NJ Senate Democrats
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SMITH DIESEL RETROFITTING BILL AMENDED ON SENATE FLOOR

Amendments Represent 'Compromise to Protect Environment'

TRENTON - Senator Bob Smith, D-Middlesex and Somerset, the Chairman of the Senate Environment Committee and the prime sponsor of legislation which would create a State program to retrofit diesel engine with cleaner-burning technology, issued the following statement today regarding amendments approved on the Senate floor for his bill:

"The amendments adopted today represent a compromise between clean air and a healthy business climate, and that compromise will go a long way towards building a balance which we can all live with.

"As amended, the bill now contains fairer deadlines by which businesses would be expected to adopt retrofit technology, and would ensure that the technology would not be damaging to diesel engines currently on the road. It would also clarify that the requirement for ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel would be implemented concurrently with the US government, to ensure easier transition for intrastate transport, and would give the DEP greater authority on the distribution and dispersment of retrofit dollars.

"These amendments make for a better bill, one that both the business community and environmentalists can be happy with. By including the business community as a willing partner in our efforts to clean up New Jersey's skies, we are ensuring that we will be successful in the long-run."

The bill is now pending a full vote of the Senate, before going to the General Assembly for consideration. It is currently pending in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

The Senate also approved Senator Smith's bill, SCR-113, which would propose a constitutional amendment, for consideration by New Jerseyans on the November ballot, to dedicate a portion of the revenue generated by the State's Corporate Business Tax (CBT) to air pollution control and grants for diesel engine retrofits. The bill would not raise taxes, but would dedicate 17 percent of the CBT's current environmental dedication over the next 10 years to provide grants for the diesel engine retrofits. It was approved by a vote of 38-0 and now heads to the Assembly for consideration.