March 13, 2019

The Lone Star Chapter of the Sierra Club Supports HB 1212: Let’s put an end to “coal” rolling

HB 1212 adds a requirement to the Transportation Code which makes it illegal for the owner or operator of a diesel-powered vehicle from modifying their emissions (exhaust) system in a manner which leads to more air pollution.

Commonly known as “Coal rolling” or “rolling coal” this is a practice where owners or operators typically of small trucks modify a diesel engine to increase the amount of fuel entering the engine in order to emit large amounts of black or grey sooty exhaust fumes into the air.

Texas faces air quality challenges from particulate matter, sulfur dioxide and ozone formation, and coal rolling exacerbates these issues both locally and regionally. With three areas now considered non-attainment for ozone, preventing the modification of these exhaust systems will provide a deterrence to this practice since making it illegal means the perpetrator could be subject to fines. In addition, any walker, jogger or bicyclist stuck behind a “coal roller” knows too well the damage it can do to human health.

Several other states, including Colorado, New Jersey and Maryland, have already made the practice illegal, as have some cities, like Cheyenne in Wyoming. The Sierra Club hopes that the Committee on Environmental Regulation will vote yes on this important bill.

Texans should be free to make their opinions known on all issues but “rolling” coal is not a form of cultural expression but a form of pollution, and we should end the practice or at least make sure there are consequences.

Thank you for your consideration,

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