

Dept. of Transportation: Second round of VW Transit Capital Assistance Grants available

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Wisconsin Department of Transportation Secretary-designee Craig Thompson announces today that \$20 million in Volkswagen Diesel Emissions Environmental Mitigation Trust funds are now available for the replacement of eligible public transit buses.

“Funding the capital needs of the state’s transit systems is an ongoing challenge,” said Secretary-designee Thompson. “These grants will allow transit operators to replace aging diesel buses with new, efficient buses. We get a double benefit – improving air quality while supporting the mission of Wisconsin’s public transit systems of getting people to jobs, shopping, entertainment and appointments.”

Volkswagen admitted to violating the federal Clean Air Act by selling diesel engine vehicles that utilized a “defeat device” that resulted in better fuel mileage and driving performance, but also resulted in the release of thousands of tons of NOx emissions in excess of regulated limits. Judicial settlements require Volkswagen to pay more than \$2.9 billion into an Environmental Mitigation Trust Fund. The State of Wisconsin is a designated beneficiary and will receive \$67.1 million over ten years to offset the excess pollution emitted by affected Volkswagen vehicles.

“Public transit is a critical element of the state’s economic development,” says Wisconsin Department of Administration Secretary Joel Brennan. “Investments in public transit translates into economic gains. According to the American Public Transportation Association, every dollar invested in public transit results in a four-dollar return.”

2017 Wisconsin Act 59 established the Transit Capital Assistance Grant Program. The grant program funds the replacement and scrapping of 1992-2009 engine model year class 4-8 public transit buses with new clean diesel or alternate fueled buses, including battery electric. The program gives preference to communities or routes that DOA determines are critical for connecting employees with employers. In the first round of grants, DOA competitively awarded \$32 million of Volkswagen Trust funds to ten communities for the replacement of 58 eligible public transit buses.

“DOA and the VW Mitigation Program are committed to reducing emissions from old buses and I am pleased we will provide additional funding towards that goal,” said Secretary Brennan.

For more information on the Transit Capital Assistant Grant Program or VW Mitigation Program please contact Ben Vondra, Department of Administration, at 608-261-6262 or benjaminh.vondra@wisconsin.gov.

A full announcement and application are available on the VW Mitigation webpage at <https://doa.wi.gov/Pages/vwsettlementwisconsin.aspx>. Written questions regarding the grant program must be submitted by February 5, 2020 and applications are due by March 18, 2019.