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How Emissions Testing is Helping Improve Our Air

ATLANTA (September 26, 2023) – Although the impact of wildfires on air quality was a frequent headline this summer, the link between air pollution and negative health impacts is not new. Recognition of the connection between illness and poor air quality was a primary reason the 1990 Amendments to the Clean Air Act (CAA) mandated the creation of vehicle inspection and maintenance (I/M) programs across the country.

“Georgia’s I/M program, known as Georgia’s Clean Air Force, or GCAF, has upheld its mission to minimize the amount of hazardous air pollutants released by motor vehicles, thereby reducing air pollution and its negative impact on human life and the environment,” said Michael Odom, Mobile & Area Sources Manager, Georgia EPD. “Since its inception in 1996, GCAF has identified more than 4.3 million heavy-polluting vehicles for repair, eliminating the introduction of 2.1 million tons of pollutants into the air we breathe.”

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released information about the implementation of a single year of I/M programs across the country. Almost 68 million vehicles were inspected in the United States in 2018. Five percent failed the initial inspection. However, more than 75% of those vehicles that failed were repaired to meet federal standards, resulting in reduced emissions. An additional benefit of emissions inspection is that motorists are more likely to repair their vehicles when the “Check Engine” light comes on, thereby reducing emissions.

Cleaner air is important for human and environmental health. Air pollution affects nearly every organ in the body, and is associated with an increased risk of cancer, birth defects, brain and nerve damage, and cataracts. In addition, air pollutants form acid rain and ground-level ozone, damaging trees, wildlife, and water.

Proper inspection and maintenance of passenger cars and trucks is important to ensure that vehicles are operating according to EPA's vehicle emissions standards to protect public health. GCAF is proud of its role in ensuring better air and better lives for Georgians.

To download an infographic, visit the Georgia's Clean Air Force website at <https://cleanairforce.com/common/press>.

About Georgia's Clean Air Force

Georgia's Clean Air Force (GCAF), in partnership with the Environmental Protection Division (EPD), is responsible for the management of the Enhanced Vehicle Emission Inspection and Maintenance (I/M) Program throughout Atlanta's 13 metro counties. Since 1996, Georgia's Inspection and Maintenance Program has prevented more than 2.1 million tons of harmful ozone-forming pollutants from entering the air we breathe. The program has also identified and repaired more than 4.3 million heavy-polluting vehicles. For more information, please visit <http://www.cleanairforce.com/>.

Sources: <https://www.epa.gov/clean-air-act-overview/plain-english-guide-clean-air-act>

<https://www.atsjournals.org/doi/10.1513/AnnalsATS.201907-538CME>

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