

## **Resolution #7**

*Submitted by: Ontario Nurses for the Environment Interest Group (ONEIG)*

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that RNAO collaborate with the Ontario Government and other key stakeholders to develop and implement a strategy to reduce vehicle idling, including drive-through emissions.

### **Background Information**

Idling of vehicles while waiting in a drive through line is an unnecessary convenience for the able-bodied. Non-disabled drivers can easily step out of their vehicles and walk in to the business to request the desired service. As human beings we value choices despite known health effects to ourselves and to others. We recognize that a drive through surcharge should be exempt for a person with a disabled parking permit.

Municipalities in Ontario such as Toronto have recognized the need for a municipal idling bylaw. There are particular groups in our society who are more prone to the effects of air pollution. Specifically, “the elderly and people suffering from cardio-respiratory problems such as asthma appear to be the most susceptible groups. Children and newborns are also sensitive to the health effects of air pollution since they take in more air than adults for their body weight and consequently, a higher level of pollutants” (2).

The effects of air pollution on health are a burden to the Ontario health care system. Treatment of the associated health effects of air pollution may include: “hospital admissions, visits to the emergency room or doctor's office, homecare service, medication such as inhalers for asthma. Other considerations include lost productivity in the workplace, lost wages due to sick time, out of pocket expenses incurred while ill (e.g., additional child care costs), and, finally lost quality of life or life itself” (2).

Decreased vehicle emissions would also have the secondary effects of decreasing the emission of the greenhouse gases CO<sub>2</sub> and methane, which contribute to climate change (3, 4). Heat waves caused by climate change are particularly challenging for those with underlying respiratory or cardiovascular disease, especially with the presence of smog.

Therefore, we advocate for a surcharge those who still choose to use drive through services. The benefit of such a surcharge is that it can be dedicated to treating the diseases caused by air pollution, such as asthma and heart disease.

### References

1. Environment Canada Air Quality Index. <http://www.ec.gc.ca/cas-aqhi/default.asp?lang=En&n=6B34B9CD-1>
2. Health Canada (2006). Health Effects of Air Pollution. [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/air/out-ext/effe/health\\_effects-effets\\_sante-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/air/out-ext/effe/health_effects-effets_sante-eng.php)
3. United States Environmental Protection Agency. Greenhouse Gas Emissions. <http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/emissions/index.html>

4. Statistics Canada (201). Greenhouse gas emissions from private vehicles.  
<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/100513/dq100513c-eng.htm>

5. Wellenius, G.A., Burger, M.R., Coull, B.A., Schwartz, J., Suh, H.H., Koutrakis, P., Schlaug, G., Gold, D.R. & Mittleman, M.A. (2012). Ambient air pollution and the risk of ischemic stroke. *Archives of Internal Medicine*, 172(3), 229-234.