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**STATEMENT OF MR. DALE KRAPF
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD, KRAPF SCHOOL BUS
SENATE ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE
MARCH 13, 2019**

Chairman Barrasso, Ranking Member Carper, Senator Inhofe and Members of the Committee, my name is Dale Krapf, and I am Chairman of the Board of Krapf School Bus, headquartered in Southeastern Pennsylvania. The company is a family-owned and operated passenger transportation business established in 1942 by my parents, George and Eleanor Krapf. Beginning with two school buses, we are now the largest privately held school bus contractor in the nation, operating in Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, and Virginia. In 2017, we celebrated our 75th anniversary.

I am pleased to provide testimony today in support of the reauthorization of the Diesel Emission Reduction Act or DERA, one of the most effective clean air tools in improving air quality concerns at the local level. I want to express my appreciation to one of the original cosponsors of what was always a bipartisan bill, Senator Carper, who together with former Senator George Voinovich (R-OH) introduced DERA in 2005 and was a leader on the 2010 reauthorization and is the lead sponsor of this year's bill. Also, I want to thank Senator Inhofe who was an original cosponsor of the 2010 reauthorization bill and is the lead Republican this time as well.

I am here today on behalf of the National School Transportation Association (NSTA), the trade association for private school bus contractors around the country. Private companies provide over one-third of the nation's public school bus service. I was proud to serve as President of NSTA from 2003 to 2005 and today, my son Blake serves in that role and another of my sons serves on the NSTA Board.

My family's business has been successful not just because we have followed sound business practices, but because our focus has always been on our communities and, most importantly, our precious cargo—the children we transport to and from school every day. We have a saying in our industry that we “bleed yellow,” which signifies our commitment to the safety of the children we transport.

School transportation is a uniquely American industry, and it is part of our country's commitment to a free public education. Each day, nearly 500,000 school buses transport over 26 million school children to and from school – more than inter-city and intra-city bus transportation, rail and aviation combined. School buses help ease congestion, help save energy and reduce pollution by taking an average of 36 cars off the road for each bus in service. Further, the technology of today's school bus is tremendously improved, incorporating not only clean engine and emission reduction technologies but also the most advanced safety features, all designed to protect the children on or around the bus and the air they breathe.

According to DOT statistics, the school bus is the safest form of surface transportation today – bar none, including walking, biking, transit, driving in parent's cars or teens driving themselves. Our commitment to safety and children's health is not only focused on preventing accidents but also protecting the overall health of the kids on the bus or waiting for the bus at the bus stop or at school.

That is why we have been an early, strong and consistent supporter of the DERA program and even before that, the Clean School Bus program. Over the last decade, NSTA, through our DC representatives, has helped lead an informal coalition of not just school bus interests but also representatives of other sectors to include, truck, rail, construction and water transport as well as public health and environmental advocates who support the reauthorization of and continued funding for the DERA program.

Reports done by EPA demonstrate the effectiveness of the DERA program. Every Federal dollar is typically matched by \$3 in non-federal funds. Further, every dollar invested returns between \$5 and over \$20 in health and other benefits. The program helps promote a host of new technologies, which are typically and almost entirely domestically developed and domestically built.

Funding can be used for projects to purchase newer, cleaner vehicles or equipment, repower older equipment or retrofit equipment with the latest after-treatment technologies. The program is technology agnostic, meaning that all types of clean vehicles and equipment are eligible including diesel, propane or natural gas, electric or hybrid and it supports vehicles and equipment in all sectors from tug boats to transit buses, locomotives to school buses. 70 percent of all funds go to EPA with 30 percent going directly to support state programs. EPA administers grants through the regions on a purely competitive basis with the goal of funding the projects that produce the highest benefits. Only technology that has been certified as effective is eligible, but the program also helps in the development of newer technologies by creating an incentive for manufacturers to obtain the required certification of effectiveness.

We are proud of the progress that has been made and especially that the school bus sector has probably been the single largest sector to benefit from the program since the program was established. Communities around the country benefit by having new or retrofitted buses to take children to and from school. We have worked with EPA to help pioneer access to grant funds to both public and private entities using the authority in the Act to fund projects through non-profit entities working to improve air quality and transportation safety. However, because the grants can be a challenge for a small rural school district and their transportation contractors, we pushed for language in the last reauthorization bill to help streamline the process through the use of rebates as a way to get the funds to where they are needed quickly and efficiently.

The EPA's School Bus Rebate program allows local school districts and companies under contract to those districts equal access to funding for taking older buses off the road and replacing them with new buses that often can emit 95% less pollution than the ones being removed. I am delighted that Krapf School Bus received one of these rebates in 2017 which we used to purchase the bus I was happy to bring to DC to highlight the benefits of the program with then-Acting EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler on October 1 of last year as part of the agency's commitment to protecting children's health.

We have developed a wonderful working relationship with the EPA at every level from the current and past Administrators to the career staff at headquarters and around the country. We share in their commitment to the DERA program and the larger goal of clean air and protecting children's health.

One issues we continue to work on is ensuring the broadest possible access to the funding for companies providing transportation services to local school districts. The 2010 Amendments to DERA modified eligibility to allow private entities under contract to eligible governmental entities to have equal access to funding, but EPA has only allowed that in the case of the rebate program, not in the grant program. We have worked with EPA to allow private companies to apply through our nonprofit trade association, but limitations on the number of applications allowed for any one entity, even for an entity that is applying on behalf of a national membership, has again limited our access to grant funds. These are issues we will continue to work with the agency to address.

Some have questioned why a program that was originally authorized in 2005 is still needed. The answer is simple – it still works and produces benefits well in excess of cost. Diesel vehicles are the work horses of our economy and they last a long time. In our school bus fleet in Pennsylvania, we work hard to get newer vehicles into service, but we also helped take over a county system in Virginia, where the buses were considerably

older. Some states operate systems where the average age of a bus may be more than 15 years old. That means, there are as many buses older than 15 years as there are newer than that. DERA helps communities get those older buses off the road, cleaning the air in the process and also improving transportation safety.

We believe the program is still extremely valuable and needed, and we strongly support its reauthorization as provided for in the legislation to be introduced week by Senators Carper, Inhofe, Barrasso, and the other Members of this committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to be here today and to speak in support of the bill before the committee and I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.