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No Idle Task



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Whether you like it or not, nearly all Middlebury residents seem to have an opinion about the town's new idle free policy.

"I think it's an exciting idea," says Margaret Klohck.

"It sounds kind of ridiculous, just kind of stupid," says Brian Barron.



Middlebury selectmen passed the resolution at their meeting last week. The policy urges drivers to idle their engines for no more than three minutes, but falls short of making it mandatory.

"We're not really trying to hammer people with enforcement as much as really educate them on changing their transportation habits and driving habits," explains Middlebury Energy Coordinator Laura Asermily.



And not even freezing temperatures are enough to stop Asermily from "educating" this community.

"Results show that even 10 seconds of idling uses the energy equivalent of driving one mile in traffic, so it's actually better to turn off your car and restart it. It takes less energy," she says.



The policy is patterned after idle-free initiatives in several other states and Canadian provinces. Burlington is the only Vermont city with an actual idle free ordinance. Brattleboro approved a resolution similar to the one passed in Middlebury.

Schools in Vermont are leading the way when it come to idle-free policies. At the elementary school in Middlebury, the school requests that all parents turn off their engines while picking up students and they require bus drivers to do it. A new state law took effect this past May, requiring all Vermont school bus drivers to turn off bus engines while picking up students.



While most everyone agrees the idea will help cut down on pollution, not everyone thinks Middlebury's new policy is practical.

"I understand it's a big topic, but I don't think idling your car for a bit is really going to be that significant. It's cold up here so I can understand

while people want to idle with the heat on for a bit," says Barron.

But whether you agree with it or not, it appears Middlebury's idle-free policy is here to stay. And only time will tell how effective it will be.

[Keagan Harsha](#) - WCAX News



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