

From: Wayne Michaud [<mailto:info@idlefreevt.org>]

Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2014 2:05 PM

To: Mayor's Office [<mailto:mayor@burlingtonvt.gov>]

Cc: Schirling, Mike; King, John; Bushor, Sharon; Blais, Norman; Bryan Aubin; Vince Brennan; Kevin Worden; Jane Knodell; Maxwell Tracy; Jennifer Green; Mary Sullivan; Rachel Siegel; David Hartnett; Joan Shannon; Chip Mason; Karen Paul; Ayres, Tom; Paul Decelles

Subject: Burlington Idling Ordinance

Dear Mayor Weinberger,

The issue of vehicle idling in Burlington has been in the news recently. On January 29th, the Seven Days weekly newspaper ran the story, "[Whatever Happened to Burlington's Ban on Excessive Car Idling?](#)". And on February 13th at Champlain College, there was a screening of the documentary film, *Idle Threat*, followed by a panel discussion with the filmmaker and local idling reduction advocates. Part of that discussion dealt with the lack of enforcement of Burlington's idling ordinance.

The Seven Days article confirmed my experiences of past contact with the Burlington Police Department: they have virtually no interest in enforcing this ordinance. They've meted out some warnings and last year, just eight tickets (former Deputy Chief Walter Decker told me the BPD had issued just under 60 idling tickets from 2010 to the end of 2011, so enforcement has gotten even more lax). The BPD talks about an educational approach. This does not seem to be working well. Excessive idling is alive and well in Burlington. We have educated for years, in Burlington and around the state. Education is the key, but it can only work effectively with a law behind it, especially a law that is enforced.

Chief Michael Schirling is quoted in the Seven Days article as saying that enforcement of the idling ordinance is not "high on our radar." Please explain to me why this is so. Parking enforcement issued more than 55,000 parking ticket violations in 2013. They are also charged with enforcing the idling ordinance, but don't do it. **Which is more serious: a vehicle that has exceeded its parking meter limit, or one that has been idling beyond three minutes?** [red emphasis added after email sent]

Obviously, the BPD is treating the idling ordinance as a "nuisance law", overlooking the significant adverse impact of excessive idling. Only the police have some idea of how many vehicles idle in Burlington daily. The impact of just one light-duty vehicle idling while parked for 10 minutes daily:

- emits 590 lbs. of CO2 annually
- spews [exhaust pollutants](#) that cause respiratory disease; Vermont has the [highest adult asthma rate](#) in the nation
- costs its owner \$50 to \$215 annually (depending on engine liter size) at current fuel prices

If the BPD would enforce the law, they could reasonably issue eight tickets (at \$12 each) a day rather than a year. This could bring \$35,000 into Burlington's coffers in a year. But much more importantly, people will start to get the message that Burlington takes idling seriously, that those no idling signs really do mean something, and that this will contribute to the betterment of the quality of life of Burlingtonians.

Thank you,
Wayne

Wayne Michaud, Director | IDLE-FREE VT INC.

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