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## **South Shore Clean Cities members awarded \$206,000 in Indiana Volkswagen grants**

Projects to bring 24 electric vehicle charging stations to Northern Indiana

ST. JOHN, INDIANA — South Shore Clean Cities partners at two metropolitan planning organizations in Northern Indiana last week were awarded \$206,000 in Indiana Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Trust Fund grants funds to aid in the expansion of public electric vehicle charging stations across local communities, the nonprofit announced today.

The Indiana Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Trust Fund Committee approved the successful grant applications for the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) and the Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG) metropolitan planning organizations during a virtual meeting Wednesday, November 18.

The projects involve a total of 24 Level 2 electric vehicle charging stations in 18 communities. The stations will be located in Crown Point, Gary, Lake Station, Michigan City, Whiting, Hammond, Portage, Burns Harbor, Highland, Merrillville and Munster in the NIRPC region and Culver, Elkhart, Goshen, Mishawaka, Plymouth, South Bend and Warsaw in the MACOG region.

“South Shore Clean Cities was pleased to assist our partners at NIRPC and MACOG with successful Indiana Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Trust Fund grant applications to expand Level 2 electric vehicle charging station locations across Northern Indiana,” South Shore Clean Cities Executive Director Carl Lisek said. “These stations will help accelerate the adoption of electric vehicles and will serve as destinations for electric vehicle owners, helping to support the local economy while improving air quality. We applaud the leadership at NIRPC and MACOG as well as the municipal leaders they serve for their roles in embracing sustainable transportation and encourage others to follow their example.”

The awards represent 42% of the total grants awarded. The Committee approved a total of \$493,000 in funding for 56 locations statewide.

South Shore Clean Cities partnered with NIPSCO for an incentive program dubbed Project Plug-IN for this round of grant applications. NIPSCO pledged a cash match of up to \$500 for each successful grant application submitted that met eligible criteria. Eligible entities included public and nonprofit NIPSCO electric customers and Northern Indiana Green Fleet Program members in good standing who worked with South Shore Clean Cities to submit a proposal.

South Shore Clean Cities manages the Northern Indiana Green Fleet Program for NIRPC and MACOG, the goal of which is to significantly improve the environmental performance of business and government vehicle fleets across each respective metropolitan planning territory

through diesel retrofits and other strategies. South Shore Clean Cities guides the member fleets to help mitigate barriers preventing the adoption of sustainable transportation options.

"NIPSCO is pleased to partner with South Shore Clean Cities to promote the acceleration of transportation electrification initiatives," said NIPSCO Manager of Business Development Kevin Kirkham. "We are excited for these Level 2 EV stations to be installed in Northern Indiana with the help of these grant awards. We believe these EV public charging stations will be a convenience to drivers who own EVs and will help reduce range anxiety, making it easier for drivers considering an electric vehicle purchase."

Governor Eric J. Holcomb in October 2017 signed an executive order outlining steps to distribute Indiana's \$40.9 million portion of the Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Trust Fund, which was formed as a result of a settlement between the U.S. Department of Justice and the Volkswagen Corporation for its violation of the federal Clean Air Act.

The executive order established the 11-member Indiana Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Trust Fund Committee and named the Indiana Department of Environmental Management as the beneficiary of and the administrative agency for the trust fund. Projects eligible for grant funds under the program must reduce NOx emissions from diesel-powered vehicles and equipment and include the replacement and repowering of existing diesel vehicles or equipment with cleaner alternatives serving the same purpose. Indiana opted to implement the option to use the funding to support electric vehicle charging station development as well.

The Indiana Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Trust Fund Committee is further reviewing applications for DC Fast Charging Stations, with plans for announcing selections in early 2021.

This week's funding announcement builds on the past successes of South Shore Clean Cities in assisting its members and partners with Volkswagen funding projects. Not including this week's announcement, South Shore Clean Cities in 2019 and 2020 wrote 47 successful Volkswagen grant applications for members and partners totaling more than \$13.3 million for projects involving more than 240 vehicles and pieces of equipment. South Shore Clean Cities members and partners were awarded 70% of all awards in the first round of onroad/nonroad grants, 77% of all awards in the Diesel Emission Reduction Act (DERA) round and 94% of all awards granted in the second round of onroad/nonroad grants.

"These Level 2 electric vehicle charging station projects in particular lessen the burden on taxpayers by maximizing the use of grant opportunities to fund sustainable transportation infrastructure on public properties," Lisek said. "South Shore Clean Cities is proud to play a role in strengthening our local economies, improving air quality and further positioning Northern Indiana as a state leader in the adoption of sustainable transportation methodologies."

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**About South Shore Clean Cities:** South Shore Clean Cities – headquartered in St. John, Indiana -- is a nonprofit, member-based coalition dedicated to promoting sustainable transportation in Northern Indiana. South Shore Clean Cities is one of nearly 100 U.S. Department of Energy Clean Cities coalitions. The coalitions partner with members in the public, private and nonprofit sectors to increase the use and implementation of sustainable transportation and its infrastructure. The programs supported by South Shore Clean Cities and its members support domestic fuels, strengthen the nation's energy security, reduce dependence on imported oil, improve air quality and support local jobs and the local economy. Learn more at [www.southshorecleancities.org](http://www.southshorecleancities.org).