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disclosure
The authors have declares no conflicts of interest.

references
doi: 10.1093/annonc/mdw166
Published online 6 April 2016

Reply to the letter to the editor
‘Abandoning diesel because of health perspectives: are there reasonable alternatives?’ by Vreugdenhil and Mannaerts

We thank Vreugdenhil and Mannaerts [1] for their informative and thoughtful response to our recent editorial [2] regarding alternatives to Diesel fuels in the industrialised countries. We fully agree that decisions based on reducing CO2 emissions may have the adverse consequence of paradoxically increasing diesel emissions, and may indeed have already contributed to a rise in diesel vehicles in many cities. As the authors suggest, there is an urgent need to consider alternative fuels to power vehicles in heavily populated areas aimed at reducing respirable elemental carbon exposure as well as reducing CO2 emissions. Vreugdenhil and Mannaerts [1] summarise evidence that electric vehicles (EVs) provide a compelling alternative to diesel engines; we too hope EVs will become increasingly prevalent as policy makers become more aware of their positive environmental and health impact and perhaps consider furthering their growth through state subsidies. Public policy measures will be critical to this process that could consider all options to reduce emissions including car sharing, stimulating the use of lower emission vehicles (not only EVs) and promoting the use of alternative means of transport.

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disclosure
PB has consulted on diesel exhaust and lung cancer for EMA (2013–2014) and MARG (2012), two industry-based organisations. All remaining authors have declared no conflicts of interest.

references
doi: 10.1093/annonc/mdw167
Published online 26 April 2016