



Media Release

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Contacts:

Bernadette Del Chiaro, Environment California, 916-765-3224
Deborah Hoffman Senator Pavley's Office 916-651-4023
Stanley Young, CARB, 916-956-9409
Martin Schlageter, Coalition for Clean Air, 213-630-1192 x 102
Danielle Fugere, Friends of the Earth 415-544-0790 x215
Megan Norris, Sierra Club California, 916-557-1100 x 106
Roland Hwang, NRDC, 415-875-6100

White House Follows California's Lead on Clean Cars

Consumers and Environment Save Big as Cleaner Cars Hit the Road

Los Angeles – Today, in a huge win for California's environment, public health and energy security, the Obama administration announced new standards for fuel economy and global warming emissions for automobiles. An Environment California analysis found that Californian drivers will save 1.6 billion gallons of gasoline by 2016, saving \$4 billion at the pump, while reducing 14 million tons of global warming pollution– the equivalent of removing nearly 3 million cars from the road for a year.

"Oil is America's Achilles heel," said Bernadette Del Chiaro, clean energy advocate with Environment California. "Thanks to California's leadership, today's announcement is a huge step toward breaking our dependence on oil and tackling global warming."

"I am very gratified that the Environmental Protection Agency has finalized a national clean car standard based on my legislation, AB 1493," said Senator Fran Pavley, author of AB 1493. "This is wonderful news for consumers, the economy, the auto industry, and the environment. This regulation will reduce air pollution, reduce consumer costs at the pump, and create new jobs."

In addition to the significant expected gasoline savings in California, the new standards will also mean significant savings and pollution reductions nationwide. Environment California's analysis shows that the standards finalized today will save 11.6 billion gallons of gasoline nationally by 2016 - nearly as much as is consumed by all vehicles in Texas in a year. This will save American drivers \$32 billion at the pump in 2016, while reducing 108 million tons of global warming pollution– the equivalent pollution of 28 large coal-fired power plants.

"Today's final step in fulfilling a commitment President Obama made when he ran shows what can be accomplished when states take the lead and the federal government backs them up," said California Air Resources Board Mary D. Nichols. "For eight long years California and the thirteen other states that adopted our tough standards led the way. This action by the White House now means consumers in all fifty states can benefit from cleaner, more efficient cars."

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“This is a huge step for air quality and public health. Cars account for a quarter of the country’s greenhouse gas emissions, as well as increased risk of cancer, asthma and other health issues for hundreds of millions of Americans,” said Martin Schlageter, interim executive director, Coalition for Clean Air. “Californians know this reality all too well, and we’ve paved the way for safer standards for the rest of the country.”

California passed the clean cars law, AB 1493 in 2002 and adopted regulations in 2004 that would reduce global warming pollution 30 percent by 2016 compared to 2002 levels. The push for cleaner cars, however, has been happening for decades. In the late 1960s, state officials in California responded to horrific air pollution in cities like Los Angeles by adopting the first-ever tailpipe emission standards for cars. This paved the way for federal adoption of vehicle standards in the Clean Air Act, though the Act allowed California to continue setting its own, tougher emission standards for cars, and enabled other states to adopt these standards.

“Sierra Club California has been working to strengthen our clean car standards for nearly a decade,” said Bill Magavern, director Sierra Club California. “These standards show that states can lead, that the US Environmental Protection Agency can use the Clean Air Act to cut carbon pollution and we can reduce our dangerous dependence on oil. We can do all this and keep more hard earned dollars in our pockets and in our communities instead of sending them overseas to pay for oil.”

Frustrated with federal inaction to address automobile emissions and fuel economy, 13 states – Arizona, Connecticut, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont and Washington – soon moved to adopt the California program.

Automakers and auto dealers, who opposed the program at the state level, challenged the program in court. Meanwhile the Bush administration delayed a decision on whether to grant the waiver needed under the Clean Air Act for California and other states to implement the standards. Following the Supreme Court’s 2007 ruling in *Massachusetts v. EPA* that the agency possessed the authority to regulate global warming pollution, and two years after California’s initial request, the Bush administration EPA finally denied the waiver in December 2007.

As one of his first acts in office, President Obama instructed the EPA to reconsider California’s waiver request, which later resulted in EPA granting the waiver. In May, the Obama administration announced an agreement with the automakers and California that enabled the creation of a single, national fuel economy/global warming emissions program for cars based on the California standards. The standards announced today are the final result of all those efforts.

“After years of court battles, and foot-dragging by the previous administration, this rule will foster the innovation in cutting edge automotive technologies that we so desperately need, reducing pollution and making U.S. vehicles more competitive worldwide,” said Danielle Fugere, Regional Program Director for Friends of the Earth.