

Environmental Defense Fund Press Release

EPA Gives Green Light to State Clean Car Standards  
Action Will Reduce Global Warming, Cut Reliance on Foreign Oil, Save Consumers Money at the Gas Pump

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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(Sacramento, CA-- June 30, 2009) The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's decision today to grant California's long-standing request to carry out Clean Car standards immediately clears the way for emission standards in California and 13 additional states to cut global warming pollution. The Agency's decision revs up the drive to national greenhouse gas emission standards for passenger vehicles: President Obama forged an agreement with states and auto makers on May 19th providing for a national clean car program in model years 2012 to 2016 that is based on the state standards. The national program would achieve a five percent annual improvement in fuel economy from today's fleet average of 25.1 miles per gallon (mpg) to 35.5 mpg in 2016.

"The states have pioneered clean car standards that reduce one of this country's leading sources of global warming pollution while strengthening our national and economic security," said Derek Walker, director of Environmental Defense Fund's California Climate Initiative.

A new Environmental Defense Fund report released today, *Saving Fuel, Saving Money, Saving Our Climate*, shows that motor vehicle drivers in the 13 states that have adopted California's Clean Car standards would save hundreds of dollars annually at the gas pump while reducing heat-trapping greenhouse gases. The 13 states adopting the California Clean Car standards are Arizona, Connecticut, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont and Washington.

"Cleaner cars are a trifecta that will save drivers money at the gas pump, reduce our dependence on foreign oil and cut global warming pollution from tailpipes," said James Fine, economist and policy scientist at Environmental Defense Fund.

On May 19th, the President announced a landmark agreement to adopt federal emission standards for model years 2012 through 2016 that apply the state clean car program nationwide. EPA estimates the national program would reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the U.S. light-duty fleet 19 percent by 2030.

Under the agreement, the state clean car standards will apply from model years 2009-2011, until the federal standards are carried out. During this transition period, the states will allow fleetwide compliance across all states adopting the clean car standards to expand the averaging pool for determining compliance.

Beginning in model year 2012, compliance with the new national standards would be deemed to reflect compliance with the state standards. The auto industry, in turn, would dismiss its legal challenges to the state clean car programs, would not challenge the EPA decision to grant the preemption waiver for the California clean car standards, and would not challenge the national clean car standards.

Cars and light trucks are one of America's largest sources of global warming pollution, and the fastest growing. Cars and light trucks account for nearly one-third of greenhouse gas emission in California and about 16 percent of U.S. global warming pollution.

California requested a preemption waiver under the Clean Air Act in 2005 but the Bush administration's EPA denied the request. Under federal law, EPA shall grant California's request to administer more protective motor vehicle emission standards unless EPA affirmatively finds that the state does not need the standards to meet compelling and extraordinary conditions. EPA denied California's request in 2008, the first time in more than 30 years EPA has issued a denial despite reviewing and granting more than 50 waiver requests from California.