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EPA Blocks States from Cutting Global Warming Pollution from Vehicles

On Wednesday December 19th, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) administrator Stephen Johnson announced that he was denying a waiver for California under the Clean Air Act to implement global warming pollution standards for cars and trucks—one of the largest and fastest growing sources of global warming pollution. This decision would also derail the efforts of the eighteen other states that have adopted or are in the process of adopting California’s vehicle emission standards.

Statement of Environment America Energy Program Director Rob Sargent:

“EPA has turned a blind eye to the law, science, and the critical role that the states are playing in tackling global warming. The decision to block California’s vehicle emissions standards is nothing less than an early Christmas gift to the automobile industry from their friends in the White House.

For years, California’s vehicle emissions standards have resulted in cleaner cars and trucks on America’s highways. In the face of federal inaction on global warming, states across the country have opted to follow California’s lead in order to achieve significant state-level cuts in global warming pollution.

Thirteen states have adopted California’s motor vehicle emissions standards and five states have announced their intention to adopt them. EPA’s denial of California’s waiver request undermines a powerful global warming pollution reduction tool available to states looking to do their part to tackle global warming. This misguided decision by the Bush administration flies in the face of overwhelming public support for policy-makers to do more—not less—to address the challenge of global warming.

The Bush administration has tried to explain away the public backlash to this decision by pointing to the increase in fuel economy standards signed into law the same day, but the comparison doesn’t add up. The Clean Cars program is about reducing air pollution including the pollution that causes global warming, not increasing miles per gallon. To the extent that the Clean Cars program forces carmakers to make cars that go further on a gallon of gas, the fuel savings and the global warming emissions will be greater and happen sooner than under the CAFE bill just signed by the president.

Earlier this year, Environment America [released a report showing that, nationally, the vehicle emissions standards blocked by EPA’s decision would have cut global warming pollution by 100 million tons per year by 2020](#) in the eighteen states that have adopted or are considering adopting the standards. Cumulative emissions reductions from this program in all eighteen states would have been 536 million metric tons by 2020—the equivalent of taking more than 100 million of today’s cars off the road for an entire year.

We are confident that the courts will overturn this flawed decision, and allow states across the country to move forward with these much needed global warming pollution standards for cars and trucks.

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Environment America—a federation of state environment groups—is the new home for U.S. PIRG’s environmental work: www.EnvironmentAmerica.org