

For Immediate Release: June 30, 2009
Contact: Bernadette Del Chiaro, 916-446-8062 x 103

California's Clean Cars Program a Go **EPA Gives Green Light to California's Plan for Cleaner Cars**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency today approved the Clean Air Act waiver that California – as well as 13 other states and the District of Columbia – needs to implement its program to reduce global warming pollution from passenger vehicles. The program would reduce California's global warming pollution by 158 million metric tons by 2020 – the equivalent of eliminating the pollution from 30 million cars for a year – and save consumers \$36 billion at the pump by 2020, according to an Environment California analysis.

"This is great news because it will help kick our dependence on oil, reduce global warming pollution, and save consumers money at the pump. We applaud President Obama and EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson for allowing the states to be in the driver's seat while the federal government creates a similar program nationwide," said Bernadette Del Chiaro, clean energy advocate with Environment California.

The Bush EPA rejected the waiver in December 2007, effectively blocking California's program. As one of his first acts in office, President Obama directed the EPA to reconsider the decision.

Today's announcement is a cornerstone of the agreement, which President Obama announced last month, between the states, automakers, EPA, and Department of Transportation to establish uniform federal standards to reduce global warming pollution and improve the fuel economy of passenger cars, light-duty trucks, and medium-duty passenger vehicles, covering model years 2012 through 2016 and modeled off of the state program.

Background:

* Environment California worked to adopt the clean cars standards in California in 2002 and continued to fight for its implementation through 2009.

* Passenger vehicles are the second largest source of global warming emissions nationwide.

* The Clean Air Act allows (1) California to set auto emission standards that are stronger than federal standards (no such standards currently exist); and (2) other states to adopt California's auto emission standards. To implement the standards, EPA must issue California a waiver of federal preemption, an action the agency has taken many times in the last four decades for innovations like catalytic converters.

* In 2005, California adopted first-of-their-kind standards requiring cars and light-duty trucks to limit emissions that contribute to global warming. The standards would cut global warming emissions from passenger vehicles by 30 percent by 2016. A total of 13 other states—Arizona, Connecticut, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington—and the District of Columbia have adopted the tailpipe standards.

#

Environment California is a state-based, citizen-funded environmental organization working for clean air, clean water, and open space.