

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Dec. 20, 2007
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GOVERNOR RENDELL: STATES FRUSTRATED BY CONTINUED LACK OF ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP FROM BUSH ADMINISTRATION ANNOUNCES PA'S INTENT TO WORK WITH CALIFORNIA, OTHER STATES, TO DECIDE NEXT STEP

HARRISBURG – Governor Edward G. Rendell expressed his disappointment today over the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's decision to deny California's request to go beyond the federal government in regulating greenhouse gases from automobiles.

Granting the waiver would have allowed Pennsylvania and other states to better protect the public's health and the quality of the environment.

"It's frustrating to see this administration, which has consistently failed to lead on environmental issues, act as an obstructionist to states that are stepping up to protect their citizens and the environment," said Governor Rendell. "Each of us has been entrusted with a solemn obligation to be good stewards of God's creation. If the federal government doesn't wish to recognize that or exhibit real leadership on the issue, it needs to get out of the way and let states like California and Pennsylvania act to protect the health of our people, the environment and our economy."

The Governor said Pennsylvania is committed to fighting the decision in consultation with California and other states. The commonwealth has adopted the stricter California emission rules, but it will not realize the greenhouse reductions from the rules unless the Golden State is permitted to enforce that portion of its clean vehicle program.

"We will not stand by and accept this short-sighted decision," said the Governor. "Now that American automakers must begin increasing the fuel economy of their vehicles, we have an opportunity to implement already established technology to control the greenhouse gas emissions that are threatening our planet and people. This technology is already being used in other nations, so it's time that American consumers benefit from it, as well."

The federal Clean Air Act gives California the unique authority to set its own, more stringent, air pollutant regulations for cars and allows other states, like Pennsylvania, to adopt those regulations. However, the federal act requires that EPA provide California with a waiver before these state regulations can be enforced by other states.

Last month, at Governor Rendell's direction, the Department of Environmental Protection joined 13 other states in pursuing legal action to force a decision by EPA on California's waiver request after waiting for two years.

The EPA's denial does not affect the smog-related provisions Pennsylvania's Clean Vehicles Program because the agency already has approved California's similar standards. Under the program and starting with model year 2008, new cars and light trucks sold, titled and registered in Pennsylvania must be certified by the California Air Resources Board.

At the Governor's urging, the program was endorsed by the Environmental Quality Board on Sept. 19, 2006, and subsequently approved by the Independent Regulatory Review Commission the following November.

The Bush administration has resisted regulatory approaches to controlling greenhouse gases. In April, the U.S. Supreme court made a landmark ruling against the administration, deciding that EPA has the authority under the Clean Air Act to regulate greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide, as air pollutants.