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Environmental Defense • National Environmental Trust • Natural Resources Defense Council
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**CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS, ADVOCATES URGE EPA
TO BACK STATES' EFFORTS TO REDUCE
GLOBAL WARMING VEHICLE EMISSIONS**

Washington, D.C. – Declaring it a “fundamental state’s right,” environment, science, conservation, health, and consumer leaders today joined key members of Congress in calling on the Bush administration to allow California to implement its new clean-car standards to limit global warming emissions.

In urging the Environmental Protection Agency to grant California a waiver under the Clean Air Act that will permit the state to require cleaner motor vehicles, the community leaders echoed a bipartisan call by more than 100 members of Congress led by Representatives Henry Waxman (D-Calif.) and Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY).

“California is trying to exercise a fundamental state’s right – the right to protect its citizens from dirty air,” noted Phil Clapp, president, National Environmental Trust. “The Bush administration has a choice: will it support states' rights or continue to serve as a roadblock to global warming action?”

The Clean Air Act provides that EPA shall grant any request from California to adopt vehicle emissions standards that are at least as protective as federal minimum standards. The Act also provides that other states may adopt the California standards if they have ever had poor ambient air quality. California requested EPA approval of new global warming emissions standards for passenger cars and trucks in December 2005. The agency has yet to respond.

“Congress wrote these Clean Air Act provisions in order to give states the freedom to adopt cleaner car standards to further protect the public from polluted air,” said David Doniger, climate policy director, Natural Resources Defense Council.

In late 2004, California adopted new standards requiring cars and light-duty trucks to limit emissions that contribute to global warming. Ten other states – Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont and Washington – have followed suit while others

are considering adopting those standards. Motor vehicle sales in these 11 states amount to one-third of all new vehicles sold nationwide each year.

Altogether, transportation accounts for more than one-quarter of global warming emissions in the U.S. each year. But, car companies have gone to court to try to derail the California standards, and the Bush administration has opposed federal limits on global warming pollution.

“While the Bush administration sits on its hands, the states are at the forefront of action to curb global warming. The federal government and automakers should not try to block this kind of progress,” said Emily Figdor, clean air & energy advocate, U.S. PIRG.

“States across the nation, including our home states here in the northeast, are seeking to protect the climate and save drivers money by following California’s path towards cleaner cars,” said Seth Kaplan, clean energy and climate change director of the New England-based Conservation Law Foundation. “It is bad enough that we have to defend these rules against attack from carmakers in court in Vermont and Rhode Island, but it is truly outrageous when the Federal government refuses to allow for this kind of state leadership.”

The California standards begin with the 2009 model year and phase-in gradually over eight years. By the 2016 model year, they would cut global warming pollution from new vehicles by almost 30 percent.

"Automakers have the technology in hand to meet California's rules," added Jason Mark, director of the clean vehicles program at the Union of Concerned Scientists. "The state is on firm technical footing when it argues that reducing global warming pollution from cars can save drivers money."

California’s right to move ahead with the new standards is subject only to the requirement that it must receive a waiver from EPA under section 209(b) of the Clean Air Act, which California has requested. The waiver requirement aims to ensure that state standards are at least as protective as the federal standards.

“With more than eight million passenger vehicles in the state and nearly 90 percent of New Yorkers living in an area where air quality is deemed unhealthy, we are mystified as to why EPA Administrator Johnson has not acted on California’s clean car waiver request,” said Peter Iwanowicz, vice president, American Lung Association of New York State. “To ensure that the health of New Yorkers is protected, we call on Administrator Johnson to issue the waiver.”

EPA has never denied California’s requests, granting more than 40 waivers in the last three decades.

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For more information and a copy of the congressional letter to EPA, please visit:

<http://www.net.org/warming/pavley.vtml>