

Florida Clean Car Rule Vital to Reducing Climate Change Impacts

- The Florida Environmental Regulation Commission (ERC) is set on Oct. 29 in Tallahassee to vote on whether vehicle emission standards for cars and light trucks similar to those adopted by California should be approved for Florida.
- A report issued recently by Gov. Charlie Crist's Climate Action Team on how Florida -- a state highly vulnerable to the effects of global warming -- can achieve lower greenhouse gas emissions assumes that there will be a sharp reduction of these emissions within the state's transportation sector.
- Florida produced 336 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents (MMtCO₂e) in 2005 and the state's greenhouse gas contributions are expected to increase to 463 million metric tons by 2025.
- Transportation accounts for 36 percent of Florida's greenhouse gas emissions. (Nationally, transportation accounts for 27 percent.)
- If Florida fails to approve clean car and light truck standards that result in lower greenhouse gases it is logical to infer that state regulators would seek to make up the difference by cutting further the state's electric utilities' emissions, a cost the utilities would pass along to consumers.
- The proposed Florida rule adopts by reference the California rule, which was specifically written to induce auto manufacturers to build and sell cars and light trucks that produce less greenhouse gas.
- EPA refused to waive the Clean Air Act to allow California's rule to go into effect. It is predicted that a court challenge by California and a number of states will result in a favorable ruling for greenhouse gas reduction and the California rule will ultimately take effect.
- 13 states have adopted the California rule.
- According to the Florida DEP the average price of light cars and trucks may increase under the rule by \$92 to \$668 dollars but consumers also will see a corresponding *decrease* in operating costs resulting from greater fuel efficiency. Over a vehicle's lifetime the new standards are likely to provide consumers with \$1,000 to \$2,300 in fuel savings.
- The Alliance of Automotive Manufacturers is leading the opposition to the Florida rule, favoring instead less stringent federal Clean Air Act approved CAFE standards (Corporate

Average Fuel Economy Standards). The Alliance has also been a consistent opponent of aggressive fuel economy standards.

- The Florida standards were called for by Governor Charlie Crist in Executive Order 07-127. (The proposed Florida rule 62-285.400 adopts the California Motor Vehicle Emission Standards pursuant to s. 177 of the federal Clean Air Act but provides some differences in how the rule is implemented.)
- If approved by the ERC the rule must be ratified by the Florida Legislature according to a provision of HB 7135, passed into law earlier this year. Given the short time for completion of the rule making process, if the ERC does not vote to approve the rule next week, Florida will not have a strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from cars and light trucks.