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CLUB • SOUTHERN ALLIANCE FOR CLEAN ENERGY • UNION OF CONCERNED SCIENTISTS

February 11, 2008

Dear Senator:

On behalf of our millions of members nationwide, we urge you to co-sponsor S. 2555, Senator Boxer's bill to permit California and other states to implement their standards to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from motor vehicles. Already 14 states have taken the lead by adopting these clean car standards, and more are following. Including California, these states represent nearly one-half of the nation's new vehicle sales. If allowed to proceed, this would be among the most effective steps yet taken to curb America's contribution to global warming.

Please stand up for your state's right to take action on global warming by co-sponsoring S.2555.

The Clean Air Act allows California to set its own vehicle emissions standards to protect public health and welfare. The Act also gives other states the option to adopt California's standards. To implement these standards California needs a normally-routine waiver from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The EPA has granted 50 such waiver requests over the past four decades without a single previous denial before this December.

In 2002, California's legislature passed the Vehicle Global Warming Law, AB 1493. In 2005, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) developed standards to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from new vehicles 30% by 2016 and applied to EPA for the normally routine waiver. Since then, Connecticut, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont and Washington have adopted these standards. Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, Montana and Utah are all considering adoption of these standards through legislative or administrative action.

On December 19th, contradicting the advice of EPA's technical and legal staff and the overwhelming majority of public comments, Administrator Stephen Johnson denied California's waiver request on the grounds that California did not have "compelling and extraordinary" conditions that warranted the right to set greenhouse gas standards. Johnson erroneously noted that the new fuel economy standards were stronger than California's program and would avoid a "patchwork" of standards.

We strongly disagree with the legal foundation of the Administrator's decision and his erroneous claims. To date, the Attorney Generals of 18 states have joined in litigation to overturn the waiver denial. Further, according to the California Air Resources Board (CARB), its clean car standards will yield significantly greater greenhouse gas emission reductions in 2016 than the new 35 CAFE standard will in that year.

A series of decisive courtroom victories together with technical reports and analyses demonstrate that California's clean car standards are technologically feasible and cost effective, comply with the Clean Air Act and provide enormous benefits in greenhouse gas reductions.

S. 2555 will overturn the Administration's erroneous roadblock to California's and your state's greenhouse gas standards for vehicles. Again, we urge you to co-sponsor S. 2555.

Sincerely,

Betsy Loyless, Chair
Donal O'Brien, Vice President
Audubon Society

Mark Wenzler
Director, Clean Air and Climate Programs
National Parks Conservation Association

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