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On Proposed Revisions to the Pennsylvania Clean Vehicles Program
Before the Pennsylvania Environmental Quality Board
March 20, 2006, Rachel Carson State Office Building, Harrisburg, PA

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

Good evening, my name is Jan Jarrett, and I am Vice President of Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future (PennFuture). PennFuture is a statewide public interest membership organization that advances policies to protect and improve the state's environment and economy. With offices in Harrisburg, Philadelphia, West Chester and Pittsburgh, PennFuture's activities include litigating cases before regulatory bodies and in local, state and federal courts, advocating and advancing legislative action on a state and federal level, public education and assisting citizens in public advocacy.

We thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony about changes to the Pennsylvania Clean Vehicle Program. PennFuture fully supports the proposed amendments to the Clean Vehicles Program. The program, that adopts the California Low Emission Vehicle standards for tailpipe emissions, is necessary for Pennsylvania to attain health-based clean air standards.

Right now, 37 counties that are home to more than half of Pennsylvania's population do not meet clean air standards. About one-third of the air pollution in the Commonwealth originates from cars and trucks which emit nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds which are precursors to ozone smog pollution and benzene which is a toxic air pollutant that can cause cancer.

The health consequences of air pollution are serious and profound. More than 1 million Pennsylvanians live with chronic lung diseases like asthma that make them sensitive to air pollution. A soon-to-be-released report by PennEnvironment shows that ozone smog pollution triggers 300,000 asthma attacks per year, sends 7,000 people to the hospital each year because of respiratory problems, causes 2,000 new cases of asthma each year and causes 900,000 missed school days.

The California Low Emission Vehicle emissions standard will achieve reductions of pollution significantly greater than the Federal Low Emission Vehicle standards. Full implementation of the Clean Vehicles Program which requires Pennsylvania to adopt the California Low Emission Vehicle tail-pipe standard will reduce nitrogen oxide pollution by 9 percent, the emissions of volatile organic compounds by 6 to 12 percent and toxic benzene emissions by 7 to 15 percent

Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future
610 N. Third Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101-1113
Tele: 717-214-7920
Fax: 717-214-7927
e-mail: info@pennfuture.org

Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future
425 Sixth Ave., Ste. 2770
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
Tele: 412-258-6680
Fax: 412-258-6685
e-mail: info@pennfuture.org

Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future
1518 Walnut Street, Suite 1100
Philadelphia, PA 19102
Tele: 215-545-9691
Fax: 215-545-9637
e-mail: info@pennfuture.org

lower than reductions that would result from the federal car by 2025. If reductions in these air pollutants do not come from cars and light trucks, further reductions of pollution will be required from power plants and industries, making it hard to locate new businesses and expand existing businesses in areas that do not meet clean air standards.

These pollution reductions can be achieved now at no additional cost to the consumer. Right now, cars that meet the cleaner California standards are selling for exactly the same price as the federal car. Since the cleanest cars are also the most fuel-efficient, any future increase in initial price will be offset by savings at the gas pump. In addition automobiles meeting the California tail-pipe standards carry better warranties for the emission control systems which can save consumers additional out of pocket maintenance and repair costs as the vehicles age.

Ten other states, including New York, New Jersey and all the New England states except New Hampshire either have already adopted the cleaner California standard or are in the process of enacting the program. A report by the National Academy of Science's National Research Council released last week found that California's role in setting emissions standards has been scientifically valid and necessary to achieve clean air goals in parts of the country struggling to clean up the air. The report also found that the California standards have helped speed up technological air pollution control innovations.

PennFuture fully supports full implementation of the Pennsylvania Clean Vehicles Program. It is good for public health, good for the environment and good for the economy.