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REVIEW COMMISSION  
MAR 28 2006

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BOARD

TESTIMONY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BOARD  
Marple Township Building  
March 28, 2006

My name is Sidne Baglini. I am a resident of Newtown Square and I support the proposed amendments to the rules governing the Pennsylvania Clean Vehicles Program.

There are quite a few good reasons for strengthening the regulations on new vehicle emissions. Having cleaner air to breathe seems like it should be sufficient reason, but fuel efficiency, compliance with the Clean Air Act, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions by up to 30% are also valid arguments for these amendments.

However, I would like to spend my allotted time speaking about the health issues that are an integral part of today's discussion. Meet Andrew. He's 7 and he loves to do the things all 7-year-old boys do including street hockey and football, bicycling and Capture the Flag. He is also a birder and a budding naturalist. He is also prone to asthma attacks. When they are playing outdoors, his 10 year old brother listens for wheezing and runs home to tell their Mom that Andrew needs his "smoke machine", his nebulizer. When the air quality is particularly bad, he stays inside playing board games while the other children play outdoors. He is one of 1,000,000 Pennsylvanians who suffer from respiratory diseases but he is special because he's my grandson and he is the major reason I am here today.

In talking to people in recent weeks about this hearing and these proposed amendments, I was struck by the fact that nearly everyone knows someone who has problems breathing. Some told me that they were fine as children but have developed asthma as adults. Some listed children, grandchildren, or elderly relatives who have respiratory problems that seem to get worse when the air "is heavy" or they spend time outdoors. My husband volunteers at a hospital in the city, working with children in the emergency room or who have been admitted to the hospital. He meets city children who make frequent emergency room visits due to severe asthma. It is estimated that there are 370,000 asthma attacks annually, resulting in emergency room visits and in some cases, in premature

death. In addition to the health aspect, our state government needs to recognize the resultant Medicaid costs, lost wages, lost days of school attendance, and the demands on community emergency services. While not all respiratory problems stem from pollution, the correlation between polluted air and increased respiratory trauma is well founded.

In 2003, the state of Pennsylvania ranked 11th in the nation for worst smog pollution from cars and trucks. We are also downwind of the industrial pollution from Ohio that has led to 37 counties in Pennsylvania failing to meet federal air quality standards. This county, this place where you sit today, does not meet the federal air quality standards. I am here and most of us are here to plead for better air to breathe - that doesn't seem like an unreasonable demand, does it?

By adopting these amendments to the Clean Vehicle Program, we can move from the ranks of the 11th worst to the 11th most proactive state in the Union. By joining our neighbors, New York and New Jersey, most of the New England states, and three west coast states in setting higher emissions standards for new cars, Pennsylvania can improve air quality for its citizens, protect public health, reduce medical costs, improve auto efficiency, begin to address a contributing factor to global warming, and help the Andrews in this state lead normal, active, healthy lives.

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