

First I would like to say thank you for the opportunity to air my views in this public forum. I wish to go on record as supporting the proposed amendments to the rules governing the Pennsylvania Clean Vehicles Program. While I am glad that my home state is working on trying to improve its air quality, it amazes me that in the year 2006 we are still actually debating the importance of clean vehicles and clean air. One hundred years ago the early environmentalists began attempts to rein in technology and development with warnings of potential hazards to the environment. In the 1960s, environmental consciousness frequently garnered front-page coverage and made its way into mainstream awareness if not actual acceptance. This growing environmental awareness brought us to the first celebration of Earth Day in 1970 thanks to Senator Gaylord Nelson and a massive grassroots movement. The technology we so desperately need today was already in existence in the early 1970s, much of it being used on a small scale thanks to the efforts of devoted individuals. Unfortunately, when these inspired and ingenious inventors and entrepreneurs attempted to elicit the help of our government, they got the cold shoulder. In fact, the vast majority of the grant money at that time went to oil companies and other large corporations, essentially putting a stranglehold on the development of this important technology. Not only that, but it enabled these corporations, who had a vested interest in controlling this technology for themselves, to keep the technology out of the public awareness. Had we, America that is, developed these kinds of technologies beginning thirty years ago, we would be in better environmental shape, we would be in better employment and economic shape and we would be leading the entire world into the new millennium with our heads held high. Instead, other countries are leading the way as the United States denies the existence of global warming and thwarts international efforts to reverse environmental damage. I think anyone who is prepared to treat this issue honestly will have to admit that the dreamers and pioneers of the environmental movement that began in earnest in the 1960s were actually on to something important. According to the results of a Harris Poll of 1,217 U.S. adults surveyed by telephone by Harris Interactive® between August 9 and 16, 2005:

Three in four U.S. adults (74%) agree that "protecting the environment is so important that requirements and standards cannot be too high, and continuing environmental improvements must be made regardless of cost." In addition, a plurality of adults (47%) agree that "there is too little government regulation and involvement in the area of environmental protection." These attitudes are significantly more pro-environment than in 2000, the last time Harris Interactive examined these issues.

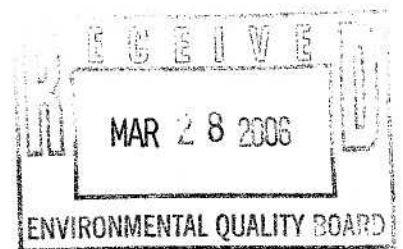
As I said, it simply amazes me that there is still so much resistance to the idea of protecting our planet and all that it provides so that a species like ours may thrive. One cannot help but conclude that there is simply utter contempt for the children and grandchildren of our time as we simultaneously use up every resource in sight and pollute whatever remains. We cannot continue to allow corporations and their lobbyists to write our laws and put their profits ahead of environmental safety and our very future on this planet. We cannot and must not continue to, not just blindly, but willfully pretend that we are unaware that our actions are causing certain harm – not only to ourselves, but to our children and their children. A blind person knows better than to cross what sounds like a busy highway without taking precautions...we do not seem to have that kind of common sense as we bully our way into the future.

I don't have all the numbers handy, but they are readily available. For example, if we simply increased the mileage requirements for all automobiles even modestly we would save an

enormous amount of fuel. I know that is not what is on the table here, it's just one of countless examples of how we could easily improve our situation. I am currently driving a Toyota Prius which gets at least 40 mpg. Even though that is the best gas mileage of any car I've ever owned, it still seems paltry. I'm mainly taking solace in the fact that it has what is called almost zero emissions. We must, in fact, begin to move away from a fossil fuel based economy as quickly as possible.

Even the compromise we are here today to discuss is relatively insignificant since the manufacture and use of the catalytic converters that we now call upon to reduce emissions in fact create significant environmental and health hazards of their own. We cannot simply assume that technology based on the same set of assumptions and denials that got us to this precipice can save us from the damage previous technologies have created. It is long past time for a new philosophy of technology that considers environmental impact first. The only people who are fighting this kind of progress are those who stand to gain personally in the short term or those who continue to live in denial of the consequences that are sure to take their toll – if not in our lifetime, then certainly during our children's lives. By most accounts the symptoms are already here as Pennsylvania has some one million people suffering from breathing problems that result from or are exacerbated by air pollution. I implore you not to let this poisoning continue any longer than is absolutely necessary to make the change- the change from denial to acting responsibly, the change from absolute selfishness to recognizing that everything IS connected, that we are ALL in this together. When will the most advanced and powerful nation in history finally realize: The Earth does not belong to us – we belong to the Earth.

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