

William R Brainerd, March 28, 2006

I support the CA Low Emission Vehicle II (CA LEV II) regulations for PA. I wish they'd been adopted for model year 2006, as the regulation originally required, but I now support the two year postponement in their implementation proposed by the state, as well as a three-year transition period during which automakers can accumulate credit prior to full implementation.

CA LEV II is good for human health, but today I will talk only about global warming and how CA LEV II helps reduce it. CA has long had the nation's toughest regulations on vehicle emissions like particulate matter and smog-forming nitric oxide, nitrogen dioxide, and volatile organic compounds. Since July, 2002, when Governor Gray Davis signed the Pavley Law, CA has also set limits on vehicle greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The CA Air Resources Board (CARB) estimates 40% of that state's global warming gases come from passenger cars and light trucks, chiefly carbon dioxide from the tailpipe. Much smaller amounts of nitrous oxide and methane, more potent global warmers than carbon dioxide, also come from the tailpipe, and chlorofluorocarbons, other potent global warmers, as well as carbon dioxide come from auto air conditioners when they are serviced or junked. CARB predicts the limits it has set will eventually reduce GHGs from vehicles by 27-30%.

PA's cars and light trucks were responsible for about 20% of its global warming gases in 1999, according to figures gathered by Adam Rose of Penn State University, who chaired an inventory of state GHG emissions. The reason vehicles contribute 40% of GHG in CA and only 20% here may be that people drive more out west or, more likely, PA has so many electricity-generating plants burning bituminous coal that transportation's share of our total GHGs is less. 20% is still substantial, because PA ranks high among states in total global warming emissions. If, as in CA, the CA LEV II regulations lower PA's car and light truck GHG emissions by 27%, those emissions will drop from 20% to about 15% of the state's total, a 5% reduction that approaches the 7% reduction below 1990 levels asked for in the Kyoto Protocol.

It is fair of PA to adopt the CA LEV II regulations. 11 states, including NY and NJ, have adopted them or are considering doing so. Seven of these states, but not PA, are further reducing carbon dioxide emissions from their power plants under the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.

Opponents say CA LEV II will raise the price of a new car. One answer to that is new cars will be more fuel efficient, allowing drivers to recover the higher sticker cost through savings at the pump, since the cheapest way a car maker can reduce carbon dioxide emissions is to make a car that burns less gasoline per mile. A better answer is that even the \$3,000 price hike per car Detroit predicts is a small price to pay to reduce global warming. For much of the following analysis, I am indebted to Don Brown, Director of the PA Consortium for Interdisciplinary Environmental Policy, this state's best response to global warming. World GHG emissions are now about 7 billion tons a year. Just to stabilize the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere at twice what it was before the industrial revolution, a point we are approaching, world GHG emissions must be cut to 3 billion tons or 57%. The reason the amount of carbon dioxide in the air will increase even as we reduce emissions on earth is the half life of carbon dioxide at present concentrations is just over 100 years, so we will continue to add more than is lost to degradation for a long time to come. The US will have to cut its GHG emissions more than 57%. We have less than 5% of the world's population, and if as China and India insist future GHG credits are apportioned by population, our share of world GHG emissions will not be the 24% it is today but closer to 5%. 5% of 3 billion tons is 150 million tons, 9% of what we emit today. How many of us are ready to cut our driving and electricity use by 91%? The children to whom we are leaving this warm planet may wish we'd paid the extra \$3,000.

Legislative attempts to kill CA LEV II are shortsighted. They would force new pollution controls on non-vehicle sources of air pollution that could cost jobs. Moreover, the federal Tier II vehicle emission regulations PA would have to adopt in place of CA LEV II don't limit global warming gases. I commend you, Chairman Adolph, for keeping HB 2141 in the Environmental Resources and Energy Committee and hope you can keep its Senate companion from passing the House by a veto-proof 2/3rds margin.

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