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57 Iris St.
Clearwater Beach, FL. 33767
April 6, 2006

Environmental Quality Board
P.O. Box 8477
Harrisburg, PA. 171058477



RE: PA. Clean Vehicles Program

Dear Sir or Madam:

As a concerned citizen of Pennsylvania, I support the proposed amendments to the rules governing the Pennsylvania Clean Vehicles Program. I also support full implementation of the Clean Vehicles Program as recommended by the PADEP, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.

I apologize for not presenting my thoughts in person at one of the regional meetings, but I spend six months a year in self-imposed exile from the air pollution in PA., so I could not readily attend the meetings. I live elsewhere six months of every year so that my lungs do not further degrade. Ozone and diesel soot are the prime triggers for my chronic bronchitis, a condition I share with 400,000 Pennsylvanians. In the Monongahela River Valley where I live for the other six months, ground level ozone is perennially high and inversions commonplace.

Throughout the Commonwealth, 37 of 67 counties and all of southwestern Pennsylvania fail to attain the 8-hour ozone standard. Consequently, to protect one's lungs and life, one must travel far outside of PA. to avoid prolonged exposures to ground level ozone and the spasmodic coughing attacks accompanying it. Before I purchased my Florida home in 2001, I tried shorter escape trips from my home at 3700 Venango in the Borough of Munhall to neighboring counties, e.g. Fayette. Unfortunately, the smog was too pervasive; it even found its way into the state forest at Ohiopyle.

I am one amongst one million Pennsylvanians living with lung disease, and one of 8.5 million living in unhealthy air. But my tale also represents a net outflow of capital from the Commonwealth. The state of Florida, not Pennsylvania, now profits from the six

months of taxes on my purchases of foodstuffs, utilities, insurance, movie tickets, restaurant outings, car repair bills as well as benefiting from my annual property taxes. Consequently, the congressional short-sightedness behind HB2141 and SB1025, which support both an unhealthy environment and economic flight, is detrimental to Pennsylvania's future prosperity.

Adopting the California Air Resources Board CA-LEV II (low emission vehicle) standards for regulating passenger cars and light-duty trucks will decrease, over the longer term of full-fleet build-out by 2025, the ozone precursors, NOx and VOCs by 9% and 12% respectively, over the competing strategy of accepting the much weaker Federal Tier II requirements. Indeed, the CA-LEV II standards will take 19 years to achieve these decreases according to DEP modeling, so it seems like a most modest proposal.

Additionally, CARB's CA-LEV II approach, as projected by the DEP, will decrease toxics in the long term with a projected 7-15% benzene reduction. Hallelujah! The reduction of toxics is very important to me. I belong to a grassroots organization, R.E.A.C.H. or Reaching a Sustainable Mon Valley. Grab bag air samples taken by R.E.A.C.H. members over the past two years reveal 33 different toxic chemicals, a veritable chemical stew, with five toxics detected at levels far above their EPA Region 3 risk-based concentrations. Each of them a neurotoxic and a respiratory irritant, these five include: benzene, 1,2,4-trimethylbenzene, acrylonitrile, carbon disulfide, and hydrogen sulfide. Benzene was found at 91 times and 1,2,4-trimethylbenzene at 65 times their EPA risk based concentrations. Once again, the tougher CA-LEV II standards appear modest measures in the face of such overwhelming air pollution.

The American Automobile Association has feed fears that the CA-LEV II standards will increase car costs by up to \$3,000 each. I understand that the DEP has sticker price comparisons to prove that the LEV autos are no more expensive than their dirtier counterparts. Not only will these autos and trucks pollute much less, they are also more fuel efficient. CARB has estimated that by 2012 CA-LEV compliant cars will save their owners an average of 1,048 gallons over the ten year life of the car. With today's *least* expensive gas costing \$2.63/gallon, the projected savings is \$2,756.24 over 10 years. Does anyone today believe the cost of refined gas will

decrease? Moreover, CARB certified vehicles have better emission control system warranties, saving their owners additional out-of-pocket repair costs.


But the most important cost savings is in fewer deaths, fewer hospitalizations, fewer puffs of expensive steroid prescription medications (as I take), fewer spasmodic coughing episodes, and fewer lost school and work days. What companies will wish to commit to a future in Pennsylvania where neither they nor their workers can live a healthy life style?

I understand that 10 other states, including our neighbors, New York and New Jersey, have already adopted CA LEV standards. Together, these states represent over 1/3 of auto sales in the U.S. I hope the State of Pennsylvania joins them so I am not forced to leave PA. to buy a low emission automobile when I go searching for my next car.

Besides lowering deadly ozone smog and toxics like benzene, the CA. standards also would reduce greenhouse gases by 30%. Pennsylvania currently contributes more greenhouse gases to earth's atmosphere than 105 other nations combined. It is these same greenhouse gases that cause global warming. While the rise of sea levels might not directly impact land-locked PA., global warming's other effects, such as uncharacteristic wide swings in weather patterns and events, have been in evidence in PA. in recent years. We should emulate the precautionary principle by decreasing our production of carbon dioxide, thereby decreasing the disastrous effects of global warming.

Thank you for accepting my comments.

Yours truly,


Frances E. Harkins,
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cc Representative Mark Gergely, and Senator Jay Costa, Jr.