



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: June 1, 2004

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Court Rules EPA Snowmobile Regulations Insufficient

Washington DC—A federal appeals court has ordered EPA to review and clarify regulations that would allow thousands of new snowmobiles to be sold with outdated, inadequate pollution controls, even after new EPA rules take full effect in 2012.

“Over and over, EPA has argued that its 2002 emissions standards for snowmobiles are as protective as they can possibly be,” said Earthjustice attorney Jim Pew, who represented Bluewater Network and Environmental Defense. “The court has disagreed, and sent EPA back to the drawing board.”

The conservation groups went to court to challenge EPA’s inadequate national emissions standards for snowmobiles powered by inefficient, dirty engines that dump 25-30 percent of their fuel unburned out their tailpipes. Snowmobiles produce so much dangerous air pollution that during the busiest winter seasons, rangers in Yellowstone National Park have been forced to wear respirators to protect themselves.

“The federal court of appeals has given EPA its marching orders: to put in place tough standards that will protect public health and the environment from snowmobiles,” said Environmental Defense senior attorney Vickie Patton. “The court’s decision shows that there is no place for these high-polluting engines when cost-effective clean air solutions are at hand.”

The Clean Air Act requires EPA to set standards reflecting the greatest degree of emission reductions achievable through technology that will be available. Yet the agency’s 2002 snowmobile standards—which will not be fully implemented until 2012—do not even require manufacturers to use technology that is already available. In fact, the standards allow nearly one-third of the snowmobiles manufactured in 2012 to be almost as dirty and noisy as those being made today.

EPA’s own economic analysis shows that the net increase in the cost of a cleaner engine is more than offset by the significant fuel savings realized during the life of the engine’s use.

“Today’s precedent setting ruling makes clear that the Bush administration’s snowmobile pollution rules were arbitrary and capricious and appeared to focus on protecting industry’s bottom line rather than our national parks and wilderness areas,” said Sean Smith, Bluewater Network’s public lands director and a former park ranger. “It’s time for the EPA to do its job and require the snowmobile industry to clean up its act.”

Today’s decision could have ramifications for the national debate over pollution from snowmobiles in ecologically sensitive areas, including ongoing lawsuits over the use of the noisy, dirty machines in Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks.

The case, *Bluewater Network v. EPA*, D.C. Cir. Nos. 03-1003 and consolidated cases, was decided by the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit.

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Bluewater Network is a national environmental organization dedicated to reducing dependence on fossil fuels & eradicating other root causes of air and water pollution, global warming, & habitat destruction. More than 20,000 members in all 50 states and four nations have already joined.

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