

PRESS RELEASE

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California Considers Climate Regulation for New Vehicles Environmentalists Supportive but Claim it Doesn't Go Far Enough

September 22, 2004— Tomorrow California, which accounts for 12 percent of the U.S. vehicle market, will consider adopting regulations to compel automakers to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The rules could force automakers to redesign the new passenger vehicles they sell in the state to achieve a 30 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2016.

The California Air Resources Board, which has a long history of pushing reluctant automakers to invent technology to make vehicles cleaner, is initiating these rules to comply with a law that passed the California legislature in 2002. Environmentalists who initiated the law are lukewarm about the proposed regulations. "Though this will be a good first step, we're concerned that the proposed rules won't come anywhere near to achieving what's necessary to curb global warming," said Russell Long, Executive Director of Bluewater Network, the organization that originally drafted the law.

Greenhouse gases are a byproduct of burning fossil fuels, and are responsible for an escalating global warming crisis. "Global warming will hurt everything from California's wine to ski to tourism industries," said Long. Scientists estimate that climate stabilization will require dramatic emissions reductions from today's levels. This information was a driving factor for legislators and a broad coalition of business leaders who championed this California law.

According to Bluewater Network's written comments on the proposed regulation, the new rule would allow substantial greenhouse gas emissions which a more aggressive regulation could have controlled. "While the rules would reduce emissions on a per vehicle basis, in the long run it's not enough and it won't turn the tide of an overall increase," said Lynch. According to the CARB staff report, by 2030, total sector emissions will be nearly nine percent higher than today's emissions. This is because California expects more cars on the road each year, driving more miles than ever.

Though the regulation will be the first of its kind in the U.S., it is part of a worldwide movement towards more climate-friendly vehicles. Europe, Japan, Australia, Canada, and China are all taking steps to demand vehicles that use less petroleum and contribute less to global warming. California's actions will not only reduce the state's own greenhouse gas emissions, but open the door for other states to follow suit. The Clean Air Act allows California to set emission standards that are tougher than federal standards. Once they do, other states can choose between the two systems. Many states are already on-track to adopt California's rules once they go into effect.

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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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