



**ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE FUND
STATEMENT ON
U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY AND
NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION
“PROPOSED RULE - 2017 AND LATER MODEL YEAR LIGHT-
DUTY VEHICLE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS AND
CORPORATE AVERAGE FUEL ECONOMY
STANDARDS”**

EPA–HQ–OAR–2010–0799; NHTSA–2010–0131

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MARK MACLEOD

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**Public Hearing
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
*January 19, 2012***

On behalf of Environmental Defense Fund and our more than 700,000 members nationwide, I sincerely thank you for the opportunity to testify today on this landmark proposal to address the extensive climate disrupting pollution from passenger vehicles and to provide consumers with nearly double the fuel efficiency of today’s cars and light trucks.

As Pulitzer Prize winning author Thomas Friedman recently wrote: “This is a big deal.” Increasing the efficiency of our passenger fleet is one of the most effective things we can do to reduce our dependence on oil, and will likely be one of President Obama’s greatest climate and energy security legacies.

Helping to Secure America

The proposed rule will help to provide energy security, economic security and climate security. With respect to energy security, when combined with the Phase I passenger vehicle standards, the proposed rule’s fuel economy and emissions standards will cut our oil consumption by over 2 million barrels a day – by more than we import from the entire Persian Gulf today. With respect to economic security, combined again with the Phase I standards, the proposed rule will provide families with more than \$8,000 in fuel savings over the lifetime of a new vehicle by 2025, for a total of \$1.7 trillion in national fuel savings over the life of the program.

With respect to climate security, it is important to note that the combustion of oil in our nation’s fleet of light-duty vehicles accounts for about 20 percent of total U.S. greenhouse gases emissions. Together with the model year 2012-2016 clean car standards that were finalized in 2010, the proposed standards will cut heat-trapping carbon dioxide pollution by over 6 billion metric tons.

These emission reductions are an important part of a national and global effort to ward off the worst consequences of climate change. The U.S. Global Change Research Program¹ has found that climate changes “are already affecting water, energy, transportation, agriculture, ecosystems, and health.” Its 2009 Assessment predicts that water resources will be further stressed, crop and livestock production will be increasingly challenged, coastal areas will be increasingly threatened, and human health will be impacted due to heat stress, waterborne diseases, poor air quality, extreme weather events, and diseases transmitted by insects and rodents.

The Pennsylvania Climate Impact Assessmentⁱⁱ, prepared by the Environment and Natural Resources Institute at Pennsylvania State University in 2009 for the Pennsylvania Department of the Environment contains similar predictions. It states:

“Climate change will likely cause many changes in Pennsylvania’s forests. First, the state will become increasingly unsuitable for many of the tree species that are now present, especially those generally associated with northern hardwood ecosystems. Northern species such as paper birch, quaking aspen, bigtooth aspen, and yellow birch are projected to be extinct in the state under high emissions scenarios, and greatly reduced, if not eliminated, even under low emissions scenarios.”

And further:

“Existing aquatic ecosystems and fisheries in Pennsylvania are expected to be stressed by projected climate changes.... Of special concern is the impact of higher temperatures and altered flow regimes on Eastern Brook Trout, not only because of its status as a recreationally and culturally important species, but because it is an indicator of high water quality and may be an early victim of deleterious impacts of climate change.”

Celebrating Success

The collaboration that helped develop the proposed rule demonstrates the best practices of our government. Beginning with the two intersecting public policy goals of improving fuel economy and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, two expert agencies – the Department of Transportation and the Environmental Protection Agency – worked with a broad group of stakeholders including automakers, labor, and states. The final outcome, when this proposal is adopted, will be that the fuel economy improvements and emission reductions will be achieved in a way that saves American consumers money.

One can only wonder what could be possible if we could replicate this collaboration with other sectors. How great it would be if the National Association of Manufacturers would ask the President to set up a similar collaborative effort to address energy efficiency and greenhouse gas emissions in the industrial sector. Similarly, how much could the nation benefit if the oil industry and the coal industry would also come to the table. The auto

industry will know its greenhouse gas commitment through 2025. Imagine how setting a similar pathway for these other sectors could unshackle frozen capital and unleash a new generation of technological development and job creation.

If I were the Chair of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, I would hold a hearing to honor all of the staff of the DOT and EPA that worked on this rule and thank them for their service to America. I might even suggest the agencies have their budgets increased so they can do other good work. Sadly, rather than take that course of action, Chairman Darrell Issa has instead castigated those involved and sent interrogatories to the auto companies that helped produce such a momentous proposal.

A far better use of the Chairman Issa's time would be for him to encourage the coal, oil, and manufacturing industries to begin a similar collaboration with the Administration. That would be another big deal.

ⁱ National Climate Assessment. [Global Climate Change Impacts in the United States \(2009\)](#)

ⁱⁱ Pennsylvania Climate Impact Assessment. [FINAL Climate Impacts Assessment Report 060209 \(pdf\)](#)