

NEWS

For Immediate Release

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Floridians to Automakers: Stop Opposing Clean Car Rules

As US automakers appeal for government assistance to prevent bankruptcy they should commit to making cleaner cars and stop opposing clean car rules, such as the one proposed by Governor Charlie Crist and his environmental chief.

Tallahassee, FL —On Oct. 29 the Florida Environmental Regulation Commission (ERC), under intense lobbying pressure from Detroit automakers, postponed voting to adopt clean car standards similar to those used in California to reduce climate-altering greenhouse gas emissions.

Detroit first got into trouble building cars that most people no longer want, and by insisting on offering these dirty vehicles, is causing pollution problems Floridians do not need.

The nation's most important industry is putting its best effort into lobbying Washington and Tallahassee instead of designing and building cars and light trucks that help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and avoid the worst effects of climate change.

Despite strong support from Gov. Charlie Crist and the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the automakers have actively worked against adoption of clean car standards here.

The California standards have already been adopted by 13 states seeking to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from tail pipes. Yet lobbyists for the automakers argue against the standards, arguing that the federal government will be approving standards of its own any day now and Florida should wait a few weeks longer before adopting standards of its own.

The federal standards the car companies are still waiting for, known as CAFE, have yet to be enacted by the National Highway Transportation Safety

Administration (NHTSA). Instead, the headlines have all been about the car companies being rebuffed in Washington as they've sought taxpayer funds to cover years of bad business decisions.

"We're declaring the wait over," said Eric Draper, Deputy Director of Audubon of Florida. "Detroit is looking for relief in Florida. It's not justified. And, as a coastal state with much to lose if global warming continues unabated, it would cost us too much."

Draper said that when the ERC meets Dec. 2 in Tallahassee "they should vote unanimously to approve the clean car rule because the governor, the head of DEP, clean air groups nationwide, advocates for curbs on greenhouse gas emissions that cause global warming, as well as those championing a new green jobs economy, environmental groups statewide, and consumers – just about everybody wants this rule adopted."

The argument in favor of waiting for NHTSA to enact a CAFE standard is "a red herring" Draper said. "The federal CAFE standards are not the same thing as the California clean emission standards. CAFE deals with improved mileage only. The California clean car standards specifically address the need to curb greenhouse gas emissions immediately."

Cleaner operating cars and light trucks that would qualify for sale in Florida under the rule are already being sold in the state, Draper noted.

"Again, contrary to what the car companies are telling the ERC, automobile manufacturers appear more than able to produce all the "clean" light cars and trucks consumers in California, Florida and other states could possibly want and need. And why wouldn't they? They can sell these cars. Consumers want them."

The Consumer Federation of America (CFA) conducted a study of the proposed rule's affect in Florida and found that consumers who purchase vehicles that are compliant with the standard spend less on gasoline on a monthly basis than the increase in their monthly auto loan payment. This direct, short-term consumer pocketbook test alone justifies ERC ratification of the standard.

The CFA report also found that the clean car standard serves the long-term consumer interest because reduced gasoline consumption reduces the vulnerability of the economy to price shocks, enhances national security and improves public health and the environment.

"In these dire and crazy financial times, with the rollercoaster ride the economy is taking us all on shaking everything out of consumers' pockets, any savings that significant should be embraced wholeheartedly by policy makers," said Florida

Consumer Action Network's Executive Director Bill Newton.

On the environmental front, Draper said, there are two primary areas in which the state has drawn up plans to decrease climate-changing greenhouse gas emissions—electrical generation and transportation.

“Without this rule’s adoption we will not achieve our goals to reduce transportation pollution,” he said. “It’s that simple. Florida, the fourth most populated state, would go on causing global climate change that is going to destroy our beaches and species habitat, and that includes the habitat we need for people, healthy communities and a vibrant economy.”

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For more on the California Clean Car rule, see the attached *Fact Sheet* prepared by Audubon of Florida, or go to www.audubonoffloridanews.org.

NHTSA is charged with administering CAFE (Corporate Average Fuel Economy) for the U.S. government. For an overview of the CAFE program go to:

www.nhtsa.dot.gov/CARS/rules/CAFE/overview.htm.

(Note the overview of the program contains nothing pertaining to greenhouse gases or their reduction. This is because reducing global warming pollution is not part of CAFE.)

The Florida Consumer Action Network and Consumer Federation of America also support the rule. To read their comments to the ERC go to:

<http://cyberlaw.stanford.edu/system/files/FloridaCleanCarsfiling.pdf>

DETAILS FOR MEDIA CALL-IN ON THIS ISSUE

What: Teleconference media briefing Friday, November 21

Subject: Florida ERC vote on California low emission standards for cars / light trucks.

When: 10:30 a.m. Nov 21.

Call-in number: 1-888-387-8686

Participant code: 7712373

For more information call:
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Florida Must Adopt California Car Rule Dec. 2 if We Hope to Put a Dent in Climate Change and Meet CO2 Reduction Goals

Florida's Energy and Climate Change Action Plan assumes that a reduction of 80 million metric tons of CO₂-E will be achieved through implementation of greenhouse gas (GHG) emission standards for new motor vehicles

The Florida Environmental Regulation Commission (ERC) will meet on December 2, 2008 to vote to adopt vehicle emissions standards for cars and light trucks similar to those adopted by California.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection is recommending the California rule be approved by the ERC. Environmental and clean car advocates also support its adoption.

Florida's recently issued Energy and Climate Change Action Plan assumes that the reduction of 80 million metric tons of CO₂ will be achieved through implementation of greenhouse gas (GHG) emission standards for new motor vehicles.

The Florida standards were called for by Gov. Charlie Crist in Executive Order 07-127. The proposed Florida rule 62-285.400 under consideration by the ERC adopts the California Motor Vehicle Emission Standards pursuant to s. 177 of the federal Clean Air Act but provides some differences in how the rule is implemented.

If approved by the ERC, the rule must be ratified by the Florida Legislature according to a provision of HB 7135, passed into law earlier this year. If the ERC does not vote to approve the rule or postpones adoption again Florida will not have a strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from cars and light trucks.

The facts:

FACT: Florida produced 336 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents (MMtCO₂e) in 2005 and the state's greenhouse gas contributions are expected

to increase to 463 MMtCO₂e by 2025.

FACT: Transportation accounts for 36 percent of Florida's greenhouse gas emissions according to the Action Plan. DEP projects that transportation sources account for 44 percent of GHG. Transportation sources are expected to continue a sharp rise.

FACT: Florida's proposed rule will not only reduce green house gas emission from cars and light trucks it will also spur sales of "Flexfuel" vehicles and the use of E-85 ethanol blend.

FACT: Florida's proposed rule will promote Florida ethanol production and help our farm economy. (Florida is predicted to be an ethanol producer when cellulosic ethanol becomes a viable source.)

FACT: The proposed Florida rule adopts by reference the California rule, which was specifically written to induce auto manufacturers to build and sell cars and light trucks that produce less greenhouse gas.

FACT: EPA refused to waive the Clean Air Act to allow California's rule to go into effect.

FACT: California and other states, including Florida, have gone to court to force EPA to issue a waiver. It is predicted that President-elect Obama will order EPA to grant the waiver. Whether he does so or not, a favorable ruling for greenhouse gas reduction and the California rule will ultimately take effect.

FACT: In addition to Florida, 13 other states are considering adopting all or part of the California rule.

FACT: According to the Florida DEP the average cost of light cars and trucks may increase under the rule by \$92 to \$668 dollars but consumers also will see a corresponding decrease in operating costs resulting from greater fuel efficiency. Over the vehicle's lifetime the new standards are likely to provide consumers with a \$1,000 to \$2,300 in fuel savings.

FACT: The Alliance of Automotive Manufacturers is leading the opposition to the Florida rule, favoring instead less stringent federal Clean Air Act approved CAFE standards (Corporate Average Fuel Economy Standards). The Automotive Alliance has also been a consistent opponent of aggressive fuel economy standards.

FACT: The U.S. Department of Environmental Protection has not adopted the CAFE rule. U.S. automakers are now seeking a financial bailout from Congress.

FACT: At the October 29 meeting of the ERC, a lobbyist for GM joined a lobbyist for the automakers to argue strenuously that there is little difference between the results of the proposed CAFE rules and the California Vehicle Emissions Rule, and that Florida should not adopt the California rule because the manufacturers cannot meet GHG emission standards and still provide a wide range of vehicles.

FACT: DEP and the California Air Resources Board have effectively refuted this argument. F 150-type trucks will be easily available in a number of models and quantity that allow manufacturers to meet the GHG emission targets.

FACT: The federal government has not proposed to regulate GHGs through the CAFE standards, which only set mileage standards and are not intended to reduce GHG. Therefore the CAFE standards are not useful to Florida's effort to reduce its overall GHG levels.

FACT: Only the California standards regulate GHG emissions. Federal CAFE standards are aimed at reducing the nation's fuel consumption. While reduced fuel consumption is a useful approach toward energy independence, regulating emissions is a superior approach to reaching greenhouse gas reduction targets.

Conclusion:

A decision by the ERC to NOT adopt the proposed rule would turn Florida's back on an important strategy to reduce and regulate GHG emissions from transportations sources.

Adopting the rule will have the effect of reducing hundreds of million tons of GHG emissions over the next decade. (Each car or light truck sold has an estimated useful life of six to ten years.)

The sooner low emission vehicles are available the sooner Floridians can do their part to reduce GHG emissions.