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January 05, 2009 - For immediate release:

11 States Agree to Work Together to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Vehicle Fuels

Will develop a Low Carbon Fuel Standard to be implemented region-wide

BOSTON – Massachusetts and 10 other Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states have committed to developing a regional Low Carbon Fuel Standard in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from fuels for vehicles and other uses, Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs Ian Bowles announced today. These 11 states – which include all the member states of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) plus Pennsylvania – will work together to create a common fuel standard that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions on a technology-neutral basis.

In June, Governor Deval Patrick sent a letter to the governors of all 10 RGGI states inviting them to work with Massachusetts on developing a Low Carbon Fuel Standard that would apply to the entire region, creating a larger market for cleaner fuels, reducing emissions associated with global climate change, and supporting the development of clean energy technologies. Last week, the heads of environmental protection agencies and, in some cases, energy agencies in the states of Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont signed a Letter of Intent to tackle the challenge of reducing greenhouse gases from fuels in a joint effort.

“The response to Governor Patrick’s call for a regional Low Carbon Fuel Standard by our neighbor states has been tremendous,” said Secretary Bowles. “Working together, the 11 states from Maine to Delaware will cut greenhouse gas emissions from cars and trucks, spur the development of clean energy technologies like advanced biofuels and electric cars, and reduce our dependence on petroleum.”

“After power generation, transportation is the next logical target for reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and a Low Carbon Fuel Standard gives us a market-based mechanism to get the environmental results we need,” said Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Laurie Burt.

“A Low Carbon Fuel Standard, implemented throughout the region, will inspire innovation and move us quickly toward a clean energy economy,” said Department of Energy Resources Commissioner Philip Giudice.

As stated in the Letter of Intent, which was made public today, a Low Carbon Fuel Standard is a market-based, technologically neutral policy to address the carbon content of fuels by requiring reductions in the average lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions per unit of useful energy. Such a standard is potentially applicable not only in transportation, but also for fuel used for heating buildings, for industrial processes, and for electricity generation. The state of California was the first to commit to a LCFS for motor vehicles, which it is now in the process of developing. Fuels that may have potential to reduce the carbon intensity of transportation include electricity and advanced biofuels that have lower lifecycle carbon emissions and are less likely to cause indirect effects from crop diversion and land use changes than those on the market today.

In Massachusetts, Governor Patrick, Senate President Therese Murray, and House Speaker Sal DiMasi committed to developing a Low Carbon Fuel Standard for the Bay State in April, endorsing the top recommendation of the Advanced Biofuels Task Force that the three state leaders had appointed the previous fall. In July, the Governor signed the Clean Energy Biofuels Act, which among other provisions required Massachusetts to seek an agreement with its fellow RGGI member states to implement a LCFS on a regional basis.

The Letter of Intent notes that the interconnected nature of fuel distribution in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions makes a regional approach to a LCFS likely easier to implement and more effective. The joint LCFS effort is also a natural outgrowth of RGGI, which covers greenhouse gas emissions from electric power plants. Most of the states in the region have set aggressive goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions across the economy, several of them, including Massachusetts, setting those requirements by statute.

In the Letter of Intent, the 11 states commit to participating in an effort to analyze low carbon fuel supply options and develop a framework for a regional LCFS in the Northeast-Mid-Atlantic region, in order to ensure sustainable use of renewable fuels in the region. The states will collaborate with the Northeast States for Coordinated Air Use Management (NESCAUM), which is conducting a study of a LCFS for the region. The states also agree to work cooperatively with other states and the federal government, and to seek to influence the design of any federal LCFS or other fuels policy that is proposed.

The Letter of Intent also commits the 11 signatory states to drafting a Memorandum of Understanding concerning the development of a regional low carbon fuel standard program, to be forwarded for consideration by the governors of the states by December 31, 2009, or as soon thereafter as possible.

[Letter of Intent signed by representatives of all participating states](#) PDF