


National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20002-4290 (202)962-3310 Fax: (202) 962-3202 TDD: (202) 962-3213

MEMORANDUM

July 18, 2007

TO: Transportation Planning Board

FROM: Ronald F. Kirby 
Director, Department of
Transportation Planning

Re: Letter to the region's Congressional delegation
regarding CO₂ emissions from motor vehicles

As requested by the TPB at its June 20 meeting, the attached letter was e-mailed to the offices of the following members of the Congressional delegation, along with an electronic copy of the PowerPoint presentation entitled "CO₂ Emissions from Cars, Trucks, and Buses in the Metropolitan Washington Region":

Congressman Roscoe Bartlett
Congresswoman Jo Ann Davis
Congressman Thomas Davis
Congressman James P. Moran
Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton
Congressman Van Hollen
Congressman Albert Wynn
Congressman Steny Hoyer
Congressman Frank Wolf
Senator Ben Cardin
Senator Barbara Mikulski
Senator Jim Webb
Senator John Warner

Attachment

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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July 17, 2007

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
United States House of Representatives
1707 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Van Hollen:

The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) recently received a staff analysis indicating that carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from cars, trucks, and buses in the Washington region are projected to increase by almost 50 percent from 2002 through 2030. Carbon dioxide is the primary component of greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global warming. The TPB seeks your support for federal action that could help reduce this steady growth in CO₂ emissions from motor vehicles.

The TPB analysis estimates that the rate of growth of CO₂ emissions in the Washington region could be reduced to 22 percent if California's proposed Low Emission Vehicle II (LEV II) standards were adopted throughout the region. Before California or any other states can implement the LEV II program, however, California must obtain a waiver from EPA. The Board was concerned to learn that while California requested such a waiver from EPA in December 2005, the EPA Administrator recently informed Congress that he does not plan to act on that request until the fall of 2008. California has announced its intention to sue EPA to expedite action on its waiver request.

The TPB is encouraged that the Congress is currently considering legislation to strengthen federal fuel economy standards. On June 21 the Senate passed energy legislation that includes new federal Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards requiring cars, trucks, and sport-utility (SUVs) to achieve an average fuel economy of 35 miles per gallon by 2020. The TPB analysis indicates that implementation of these new CAFE standards in the Washington region would reduce the rate of growth of CO₂ emissions from 2002 to 2030 to around 16 percent. The TPB understands that the House of Representatives will be considering energy legislation later this month, and that while the current version of the House bill does not include new federal CAFE standards, an amendment under development by Representative Edward Markey would include such standards.

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen

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The TPB is pleased to provide its analysis of CO₂ emissions in the Washington region for your information as an attachment to this letter. It is clear from this analysis that a significant shift toward a more fuel-efficient vehicle fleet will be essential in order to reduce the rate of growth of CO₂ emissions from cars, trucks, and buses in the region. The TPB seeks your support of federal actions that would help achieve that goal.

The TPB analysis and action on vehicle emissions occurs in support of a broader climate change initiative launched this year by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG). Activities underway include an inventory of both mobile and non-mobile emissions; identification of best practices, such as green buildings; and examination of regional approaches to carbon offset funding. The outcome of this effort will be shared with COG members, including the region's congressional delegation.

Thank you for your consideration of this letter and the attached information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Cathy Hudgins".

Catherine Hudgins
Chair
National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board

Attachment