



*For Immediate Release*

*November 21, 2008*

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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 CFA

Director of Research Mark Cooper.

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.audubonofflorida.org](http://www.audubonofflorida.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](http://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