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For Immediate Release

Contact: Marissa Stone Bardino, NMED
Telephone: (505) 827-0314 or (505) 231-0475

EPA Grants Waiver Allowing States to Implement Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions in Automobiles

(Santa Fe) – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency today granted the State of California a waiver of federal preemption allowing California and 13 other states, including New Mexico, to implement regulations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in new automobiles.

Greenhouse gas vehicle emission standards have been adopted by 14 states, but none can implement the standard without the waiver. In December 2007, then-EPA Administrator Johnson denied California the waiver. Some states, including New Mexico, sued EPA regarding the denial. Soon after coming into office, President Obama asked EPA to reconsider this decision.

Transportation is the fastest growing source of greenhouse gas emissions in New Mexico. In November 2007, the Environmental Improvement Board adopted the greenhouse gas vehicle emissions standard. The standards would apply to model year 2011 vehicles and beyond.

“This decision gives us the best of both worlds – it validates the leadership of states like New Mexico that have adopted clean vehicle emission standards while demonstrating strong federal leadership to address transportation-related climate pollution in the future,” said Governor Bill Richardson.

Today’s announcement by EPA builds on a May 2009 announcement by the Obama Administration, the State of California, and the auto manufacturers about a negotiated agreement to move the country toward a single national greenhouse gas vehicle standard starting in 2012. Moving toward a single national standard helps address concerns from automobile manufacturers and dealers in New Mexico and across the country.

“By adopting and defending these standards, states like New Mexico have effected federal action on climate change,” said Environment Department Secretary Ron Curry. “The greenhouse gas vehicle standard started in the states and is now becoming a national program. I think we will see a similar trend with the passage of an economy-wide greenhouse gas reduction bill in Congress. ”

For more information call Marissa Stone Bardino, NMED Communications Director, at (505) 827-0314 or (505) 231-0475.

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