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Governor Richardson Issues Statement on Federal Court Ruling in Favor of California Clean Cars Program

(Santa Fe, N.M.) Today Governor Richardson issued the following statement about the federal court rejection of the automobile industry's challenge to California's Clean Car Standard:

"This court ruling is yet another victory for sensible state actions designed to combat global climate change," said New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson. "The Clean Cars Program we recently instituted in New Mexico is a key part of our state's effort to reduce global warming emissions to the levels necessary to avoid the worst effects of a warming planet. California, New Mexico and a host of progressive states are again taking action – and winning, while Washington sits on the sidelines."

In the Central Valley Chrysler-Jeep v. Witherspoon case, a federal judge rejected the auto industry's claim that the federal Corporate Average Fuel Economy standards preempt the state clean tailpipe standards. This Federal Court decision in California is the second ruling in favor of the clean cars program and follows a decision by a federal court in Vermont several months ago. Also, a recent Supreme Court decision said the EPA has the authority and obligation to regulate vehicle emissions.

In New Mexico the Clean Cars Program, which will become effective Jan. 1, 2008, requires car manufacturers to sell and lease vehicles that meet the standards beginning with model year 2011. The program only applies to new vehicles and will not affect new or used cars sold before that model year.

The Clean Cars program, initially started in California under special authority granted through the Clean Air Act, has been adopted by twelve states: Maine, California, Vermont, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, New Mexico, Maryland, Washington and Oregon. Other states are currently in the process of adopting the standards, including Arizona, Colorado and Florida.