



**Please include the following comments in the public hearing record concerning the proposed amendments to Air Pollution Control Regulation No. 37 "Rhode Island's Low Emissions Vehicle Program" November 16, 2004**

My name is Bob Sheppard, and I speaking this afternoon as Deputy Director of Clean Air-Cool Planet, a Northeast-based nonprofit organization working to find and promote global warming solutions by partnering with campuses, communities and corporations on pollution reduction and public education measures, strongly supports the Clean Car standard in Rhode Island.

**Automobiles, Air Pollution and Global Warming in Rhode Island**

Ground level ozone and other pollutants related to tailpipe emissions have direct, costly, clearly-demonstrated negative effects. Recent studies from California document lifelong detriment to lung development in children and adolescents exposed to high levels of smog. Closer to home, nearly 100,000 people in Rhode Island suffer from asthma, which costs the state more than \$41 million each year in lost productivity and medical expenses. And the toll doesn't end there: 17,000 of those asthmatics are children, with the numbers growing. Attendance records show asthma is now the number-one reason kids miss school because of a chronic condition; the American Academy of Pediatrics has also reported that asthma is the number-one emergency-room diagnosis for kids. Other research, released last month by the University of New Hampshire, pinpoints a substantial decrease in worker productivity, attributed to physical symptoms related to increased smog and carbon monoxide levels, on bad air quality days.

At Clean Air-Cool Planet, we are particularly concerned with a less direct but equally significant impact of automobile pollution: its huge contribution to global warming. Emissions from mobile sources, such as cars, trucks and buses, are the second leading cause of total US greenhouse gas emissions; in Rhode Island, the transportation sector is a large contributor to total emissions, hence the need for the Clean Car Standard.

The recent release of the Arctic study on impacts caused by global warming as a result of carbon pollution pointed to sea-level rise as a serious threat to coastlines in this century, potentially affecting both the tourism industry (one of Rhode Island's largest sources of jobs) and the bedrock, resource-based industry of fisheries. Just last year, 60,000 homeowners on Cape Cod lost their property insurance because of the increased risk of storm destruction caused by higher sea levels and increased intensity of storms projected as a result of global warming.

Vehicle emissions also threaten public health, as rising temperatures contribute to increased smog-formation (exacerbating aforementioned lung impacts) – and to the

spread of insect-borne infections such as Lyme disease and West Nile virus, not to mention the direct effects of prolonged heat waves.

Climate models predict that, without substantial reductions of greenhouse gas emissions, human-induced warming will continue to rise by as much as 6-10 degrees in New England over the next century. It was this science that prompted the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers landmark 2001 Climate Agreement, to which Rhode Island is a signatory, calling for greenhouse gas emissions reductions targets of 1990 levels by 2010, 10% below 1990 levels by 2020, and overall reductions of about 80%.

Implementation and success depends upon the participation and cooperation of many public and private entities throughout Rhode Island and the region. Communities, campuses and corporations must be involved and willing to act to lower their pollution footprint, if the reduction targets outlined in the state and regional climate plans are to be met. At Clean Air-Cool Planet, we have observed in our partnerships that organizations and institutions are not only *willing* to take this action—many *have* been doing so, or trying to do so. They act with an eye toward cost savings and the bottom line, and also out of a sense of corporate or community responsibility and stewardship. It is to these leaders we should look when considering foresighted measures like the proposed Clean Car standard

For example, two CA-CP business partners with a significant presence in Rhode Island, namely Shaw's Supermarkets and Verizon, have made continual progress in reducing emissions through strategic use of energy efficiency, new technology, and renewable energy – resulting in lower emissions and tens of millions of dollars in energy cost savings.

### **Conclusion: Clean Cars, Leadership, and Continued Economic Vitality**

Clearly the impacts of global warming, and the auto pollution that contributes so prominently to it, are detrimental to the state of Rhode Island and require action. By helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the state – and more broadly across the globe, with the growth of markets and economies of scale for efficient, clean vehicle technologies – this legislation will help Rhode Island meet its existing commitment to help stop global warming, thus conserving economically important natural and social resources, protecting the public health, and heightening Rhode Island's status as a leader in the region and in the nation.

Increasing the availability of efficient and modern vehicles for fleets and for individuals in Rhode Island is a vital step toward giving decision-makers and citizens the resources they need to make optimal choices. It is worth noting here that, with oil prices slightly below \$50 a barrel as we prepare these comments; the demand for such vehicles is likely to be strong. Clean Air – Cool Planet believes that this measure is good for public health, good for the state's economy, and an important step towards dealing with one of the most pressing environmental issues facing our generation – global warming. Thanks for your time.