

Rachel Carson State Office Building
P.O. Box 2063
Harrisburg, PA 17105-2063
July 13, 1999

Office of Air, Recycling and Radiation Protection
717-772-2724

Public Docket No. A-97-10
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Air Docket Section
Room M-1500
401 M Street SW
Washington, DC 20460

Re: Public Docket No. A-97-10
Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on Proposed Tier 2 Motor Vehicle Emissions
Standards and Gasoline Sulfur Control Requirements

Dear Sir or Madam:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the May 13, 1999 Notice of Proposed Rulemaking which will produce the next generation of motor vehicles and fuels. Pennsylvania strongly supports the proposal.

We urge EPA to conclude its rulemaking in a very timely fashion in order to give both vehicle makers and the petroleum industry the maximum amount of time to meet requirements around 2004.

We commend EPA for considering fuel and vehicle technology as a system, in order to obtain the most cost-effective emission reductions possible for the consumer. We need to keep fostering the ingenuity of the vehicle and fuel manufacturers that have reduced emissions by about 90 percent from the uncontrolled vehicles of the 1970s. With the report of its 21st Century Commission last year, Pennsylvania hopes to begin addressing the urban sprawl and land use issues that contribute to vehicle-miles-traveled increasing far faster than its population growth. EPA predicts that the travel growth will start wiping out gains made in mobile source emissions by 2015 unless cleaner vehicles and the fuel to make those vehicles possible are provided.

While there continues to be differences between industry and environmental interests on specifics, there does seem to be consensus that there is a significant air quality need for further reductions in vehicle emissions, that emission standards

considerably more stringent than NLEV are feasible and that sulfur levels in fuel must decrease significantly to support achievement of those standards. While EPA will need to resolve some concerns for the final rule, Pennsylvania is encouraged that those differences seem to be small compared to the enormous improvements that will be made.

There is no question of the need for reductions in mobile source emissions. Highway vehicles are now and will continue to be significant contributors to air pollution in Pennsylvania. For example, because Pennsylvania has ozone stakeholder groups presently in operation in its central counties, we have very recent data on vehicle miles traveled and emissions in those areas. Southcentral Pennsylvania (Dauphin, Cumberland, Lebanon, Lancaster and York counties) is a typical Northeast medium-sized urbanized area, with typically moderate population growth. Yet, vehicle miles traveled from light/medium duty gasoline-powered cars and trucks will increase by almost 30 percent between 1996 and 2007.

Even with the National Low Emission Vehicle program, highway vehicles will contribute about half of all the area's NO_x emissions. Light/medium duty gasoline powered vehicles alone will contribute about one-third. Lancaster county continues to violate the one-hour ozone standard, while concentrations throughout the region are often higher than the eight-hour ozone standard during the ozone season. Adjacent to this area, the Philadelphia interstate nonattainment area continues to violate the one-hour ozone standard.

While total vehicle emissions do decrease between 1996 and 2007 in Southcentral Pennsylvania, emissions from light-duty gasoline trucks are predicted to increase. That increase is even predicted using assumptions about vehicle mix contained in Mobile 5.

Pennsylvania is encouraged that the Tier 2 program emphasizes nitrogen oxides (NO_x), while significantly reducing volatile organic compound levels. New car standards for NO_x are probably the most effective way to reduce this pollutant from transportation sources. NO_x reduction is most important for states like Pennsylvania which are significantly affected by long range transport.

Pennsylvania supports standards that are the same among all vehicle classes likely to be used primarily for personal transportation. Given the trend toward even heavier personal transportation vehicles which would not need to meet the proposed standards, EPA should also consider applying them to SUVs, pick-up trucks and full-size vans in those weight classes. All personal transportation vehicles should remain within the same fleet average. Pennsylvania also supports the principle of the same standards for all fuels. To address concerns about diesel exhaust's toxicity and potential increases in the number of light-duty diesel-powered vehicles, EPA should expeditiously use its authority under Section 202(1)(2) as discussed in its recent National Air Toxics Program Integrated Urban Strategy.

Since the proposed fleet average system does not incorporate any regional averages, Pennsylvania is concerned that the more bins that are provided, the more

opportunity may be present for unequal distribution of vehicles and therefore unequal distribution of air quality benefits.

The Commonwealth questions whether such a long compliance time is necessary for the heavier classes of vehicles. These dates are very close to the expected attainment dates in most of Pennsylvania for any new ozone standard. Giving automakers the ability to make up credits during the next year in effect will probably delay compliance by one year. If the additional time is necessary for technological reasons, EPA could adjust the fleet averages slightly to provide additional incentives for early compliance.

Pennsylvania supports matching the fuel supplied with the needs of the technology. Gasoline sulfur levels should not impede the application of advanced emissions control systems. According to some manufacturers, catalyst systems developed to meet the Tier 2 standards may be even more sensitive to fuel sulfur than those already in production. The low sulfur requirements should be national (outside California) to avoid adverse effects of higher sulfur gasoline on vehicles throughout the country. The credit system EPA devises should, however, ensure that credits for sulfur reductions already made are equitably distributed and do not unfairly penalize those refiners that have taken desulfurization steps.

Finally, Pennsylvania would support a technology review only if it is regularized, as in California, which reviews technology every other year. A technology review must not provide industry with the incentive to prove that requirements cannot be met.

In Pennsylvania, we have taken a number of measures to control our own contributions to air pollution and we continue to do so. Even so, we believe a strong federal program for vehicles and fuels is likely to be more effective than local or regional regulation. Where the federal government's programs were not appropriate for cost-effective local health protection, we have in the past taken advantage of those provisions of the Clean Air Act that allow us to craft our own control measures. However, we are hopeful that the final Tier 2 program for vehicle emissions and the low sulfur gasoline requirements will encourage the advanced technology we need to meet Pennsylvania's air quality needs for the foreseeable future.

Sincerely,

Denise K. Chamberlain
Deputy Secretary for
Air, Recycling and Radiation Protection

cc: Carol Connell, U.S. EPA