

June 22, 2011

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

The undersigned members of the Republican Party and former elected and appointed officials urge you to set aggressive motor vehicle fuel efficiency and emission standards to help relieve the United States from its dangerous dependence on oil. The volatility of oil prices along with today's soaring price at the pump are a threat to our economy and national security.

Reductions in fuel consumption could not come at a more important time. With thousands of U.S. troops fighting overseas, unrest in the Middle East and consumers at home feeling the pain at the pump we must resolve to unshackle ourselves from the world oil market. The U.S. has less than 2 percent of global reserves yet we consume nearly a quarter of oil total supply. We import a disproportionate amount of our petroleum needs at an enormous cost to our economy. If oil continues to be a primary driver of our economy and security, we will hand our destiny to other nations, many of which do not share our interests.

Cars and light trucks are the single largest consumers of oil. Today, the on-road fleet averages only 21 miles per gallon of gasoline, but we have the technology to do much better. Recent and new models such as the Ford Fusion Hybrid family sedan, Ford Explorer SUV with Eco-Boost, and the Chevy Volt plug-in electric car are evidence that American innovation can provide consumers with more choices of efficient vehicles in the showroom, save money at the pump and dramatically cut our nation's oil demand. To unleash more fuel-saving ingenuity, however, it is critical that the automotive industry has a long-term and stable policy direction.

Strong, forward-looking standards for new vehicle fuel efficiency and emissions will provide industry with needed certainty for investment in new technologies while also driving reductions in oil consumption and carbon pollution that fuels climate change. In 2007, in response to overwhelming concerns about our oil dependency, Congress passed the bipartisan Energy Independence and Security Act (EISA) that required the first substantial increase in fuel economy standards in 25 years. In 2009, the Department of Transportation, Environmental Protection Agency and the State of California worked together to adopt standards that raised fuel economy to 35.5 mpg by 2016 for cars, pickups, minivans and sport utility vehicles. The final joint rule demonstrates that a single program to reduce oil consumption and carbon emissions can result in an aggressive policy to meet the goals of both EISA and the Clean Air Act and assure that we do not again lose valuable time in systemically improving fuel efficiency.

We strongly support the joint agency efforts to continue the success of these standards by strengthening vehicle standards for model years 2017 to 2025. Recent analysis by your agencies, as detailed in the October 2010 Notice of Intent and accompanying Technical Assessment Report, demonstrate that strong efficiency standards—with improvements of six percent annually—are achievable and cost-effective for consumers. We recommend that you promulgate aggressive standards for the 2017 to 2025 vehicles under a national program that will significantly reduce our oil dependence, cut pollution and fortify our economy and national security.

Sincerely,

The Honorable Michael Castle

Former Governor of Delaware, 1985-1992;
US Congress, R-Delaware, 1993-2011

The Honorable Jim Douglas

Former Governor of Vermont,
2003-2011

The Honorable Christine Whitman

Former Governor of New Jersey, 1994-
2001;
EPA Administrator, George W. Bush
Administration

Russell Train

EPA Administrator, Nixon and Ford
Administrations

Bill Reilly

EPA Administrator, George H.W. Bush
Administration

Bill Ruckelshaus

EPA Administrator, Nixon and Reagan
Administrations

The Honorable Sherwood Boehlert

US Congress, R-New York, 2003-2007

The Honorable Vernon Ehlers

US Congress, R-Michigan, 1993-2011

The Honorable Wayne Gilchrest

US Congress, R-Maryland, 1991-2009

The Honorable Benjamin Gilman

US Congress, R-New York, 1973-2003

The Honorable Amory Houghton

US Congress, R-New York, 1987-2005

The Honorable Connie Morella

US Congress, R-Maryland, 2003-2007

The Honorable Jim Ramstad

US Congress, R-Minnesota, 1991-2009

The Honorable Christopher Shays

US Congress, R-Connecticut, 1987-2009

The Honorable Peter Smith

US Congress, R-Vermont, 1983-1987

Cc: The Honorable Ray LaHood, Secretary of Transportation
Lisa Jackson, Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency