Alaska Wilderness League ● Center for Auto Safety ● Center for the Celebration of Creation ● Center for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Technologies ● Citizens Campaign for the Environment ● Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future ● Clean Air Council ● Clean Air Watch ● Clean Water Action ● Climate Solutions ● Coalition for Clean Air ● Conservation Law Foundation ● CoolMom ● Energy Independence Now ● Environment America ● Environmental Defense Fund ● Fresh Energy ● Friends of the Earth ● Futurewise ● Greenpeace USA ● Interfaith Power and Light ● League of Conservation Voters ● Natural Resources Defense Council ● Ocean Conservation Research ● Oregon Environmental Council ● Physicians for Social Responsibility ● Physicians for Social Responsibility- Los Angeles ● Republicans for Environmental Protection ● Safe Climate Campaign ● Sierra Club ● Transportation Choices Coalition ● Union of Concerned Scientists ● Washington Environmental Council

May 5, 2011

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama,

For decades, we have watched America's growing oil dependence put our economy, environment, and national security at risk. Your administration has taken important steps to confront this challenge. Last May, you finalized landmark standards that will cut America's oil dependence by requiring the first meaningful improvement in fuel efficiency and auto pollution in decades. Most recently, you set a goal of cutting America's reliance on imported oil one-third by 2025. You have an opportunity to meet this goal with the new phase of fuel efficiency and auto pollution standards your administration is developing. Setting strong vehicle standards that increase fleetwide fuel efficiency to 60 miles-per-gallon and reduce global warming pollution 6% annually by 2025 is the greatest step you can take to cut America's oil dependence.

We see the terrible consequences of America's oil dependence all around us. Rising gas prices hurt consumers and undermine our economic recovery. Auto pollution jeopardizes the health of our communities and accelerates climate change. Every day, we send $1 billion beyond our borders – often to regimes and individuals who are hostile to the United States – to pay for oil.

Americans across the political spectrum overwhelmingly support strong fuel efficiency and auto pollution standards. In a nationwide poll, the Mellman Group found that 83% of likely voters favored a 60 mile-per-gallon standard - even if it would add $3,000 to the price of a new vehicle, an investment they were told they would recoup in four years. Americans know that investing in fuel-saving technology will save them thousands of dollars at the pump, clean up our air, and cut the country's dangerous dependence on oil.

Strong standards are affordable and maximize consumer savings at the pump. The average consumer who finances the purchase of a new vehicle would pay less to own and operate it from the moment it is driven from the dealership. Under a 60 mile-per-gallon standard, the monthly fuel savings would more than offset the additional cost of technology. With gasoline prices at just $3.50 per gallon, consumers could save as much as $7,500 over the life of a new vehicle, even after accounting for the cost of new technology.

Automakers can achieve strong standards by harnessing existing technology and continuing to innovate. Such technologies as more efficient conventional engines, hybrid-electric drivetrains, smarter transmissions, high-strength materials, and electric drive technology will all play an important role. Investing in cleaner, fuel-efficient vehicles will make American automakers increasingly competitive in the global marketplace, help insulate our economy from fluctuations in oil prices, and keep money in consumers' pockets rather than send it overseas. With these investments, we will create jobs in the United States, within the auto industry and beyond.

Standards work. Cleaner and more fuel efficient cars, trucks and SUVs are showing up in dealerships across the country, even though the first-phase of standards you helped finalize do not take effect until next year. The collaborative agreement between the federal government and the State of California, which led to the National Program, created a structure that allows automakers to build a single national fleet that complies with all federal and state requirements. The next phase of standards can complement this success and once again deliver critical benefits to the nation.

The strongest standards your administration is considering for 2017-2025 will decrease the average new vehicle's global warming pollution 6% a year; the weakest standards would require only a 3% annual reduction. By comparison, the 2012-2016 standards represent a 5% annual reduction. When it comes to protecting consumers, the environment, the economy, and our national security, the difference between the strongest and weakest standards could not be clearer.

The weakest standards would cost Americans $370 billion in net savings through 2030 with most of the money ending up in foreign hands. The strongest standards put that money back in Americans' pockets by reducing U.S. oil consumption 2.5 million barrels of oil per day in 2030 - almost 50% more oil than we imported last year from the Persian Gulf. The strongest standards also protect our health and environment by preventing two times more global warming pollution than the weakest proposal. That is as much pollution as all of America's cars and light trucks release in over two years.

These standards will determine the types of cars and trucks our children will drive decades from now. You have a historic opportunity to do more than any previous President to ensure that we can create a future that frees America from its dangerous dependence on oil, keeps billions of dollars in our economy and reduces the threat of climate change. We urge you to seize this opportunity by setting strong vehicle standards that increase fuel efficiency to 60 miles-per gallon and reduce global warming pollution 6% annually by 2025.

Sincerely,

Cindy Shogan
Executive Director
Alaska Wilderness League

Clarence Ditlow
Executive Director
Center for Auto Safety

Joy Bergey
Executive Director
Center for the Celebration of Creation
(Pennsylvania)

V. John White
Executive Director
Center for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Technologies
(California and the West)

Adrienne Esposito
Executive Director
Citizens Campaign for the Environment
(New York)

Jan Jarrett
CEO and President
Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future

Joseph Otis Minott, Esq.
Executive Director
Clean Air Council
(Pennsylvania)

Frank O'Donnell
President,
Clean Air Watch

Bob Wendelgass
President
Clean Water Action

Gregg Small
Executive Director
Climate Solutions

Joseph K. Lyou, Ph.D
President and CEO
Coalition for Clean Air

John Kassel
President
Conservation Law Foundation
(New England)

Terri Glaberson
Executive Director
CoolMom
(Washington State)

Daniel Emmett
Executive Director
Energy Independence Now
(California)

Margie Alt
Executive Director
Environment America

Fred Krupp
President
Environmental Defense Fund

Michael Noble
Executive Director
Fresh Energy
(Minnesota)

Erich Pica
President
Friends of the Earth

April Putney
Co-Director
Futurewise
(Washington State)

Philip Radford,
Executive Director
Greenpeace USA

Rev. Canon Sally G. Bingham
President
Interfaith Power and Light

Gene Karpinski
President
League of Conservation Voters

Francis Beinecke
President
Natural Resources Defense Council

Michael Stocker
Director
Ocean Conservation Research

Andrea Durbin
Executive Director
Oregon Environmental Council

Peter Wilk, MD.
Executive Director
Physicians for Social Responsibility

Martha Dina Arguello
Executive Director
Physicians for Social Responsibility- Los Angeles

Rob Sisson
President
Republicans for Environmental Protection

Dan Becker
Director
Safe Climate Campaign

Michael Brune
Executive Director
Sierra Club

Rob Johnson
Executive Director
Transportation Choices Coalition
(Washington State)

Kevin Knobloch
President
Union of Concerned Scientists

Joan Crooks
Executive Director
Washington Environmental Council

cc: Secretary Ray LaHood, Administrator Lisa Jackson, California Air Resources Board Chairman Mary Nichols