

CENTER FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

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EPA's Endangerment Finding Marks First Step Toward Global Warming Solutions Under the Clean Air Act

Pollution Reductions From Vehicles and Smokestacks, Plus

Science-based Carbon Pollution Cap, Must Follow

WASHINGTON- The Center for Biological Diversity issued the following statement today from Executive Director Kierán Suckling as the Environmental Protection Agency released its finding that greenhouse gas pollution constitutes a threat to public health and welfare under the Clean Air Act:

"Today's announcement from the Environmental Protection Agency demonstrates the power of the Clean Air Act to curb global warming. We applaud the EPA for moving forward to implement one of our nation's most successful environmental laws to avert catastrophic runaway global warming.

"Now the Clean Air Act must be put to full use to address the crisis of climate change. As President Obama heads to Copenhagen, his hands are not tied by the tragically weak cap-and-trade bills being debated in Congress. President Obama needs to lead, not follow. Today's decision clearly shows that his administration already has the legal tools to achieve deep and rapid greenhouse emissions reductions from major polluters, consistent with what science demands, through the Clean Air Act. The next step is for EPA to issue pollution-reduction rules for vehicles, smokestacks, and other polluters, and to set a science-based national pollution cap for greenhouse gases."

Last week, the Center for Biological Diversity and 350.org petitioned the EPA to set national limits for carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas pollution under the Clean Air Act. The petition seeks to enforce a central provision of the Act that requires EPA to designate "criteria" air pollutants, set national pollution limits for these pollutants to protect the public health and welfare, and assist the states in carrying out plans to reduce emissions from major pollution sources to attain or maintain the national standards.

The petition seeks to have seven greenhouse gases designated as "criteria" air pollutants and atmospheric CO₂ capped at 350 parts per million (ppm), the level leading scientists say is necessary to avoid the worst impacts of global warming.

Emissions-reduction targets announced by Obama in the lead-up to Copenhagen, which mirror the targets in the climate bill passed by the House of Representatives earlier this year, have virtually no chance of avoiding dangerous climate change. Combined with other countries' proposals on the table in Copenhagen, CO₂ concentrations would increase to more than 650 parts per million.[1] In contrast, the Clean Air Act, fully implemented, could put us on track to reducing CO₂ to below 350 ppm.

Click hereto read the petition for a national pollution cap under the Clean Air Act.

The Center for Biological Diversity is a national, nonprofit conservation organization with more than 240,000 members and online activists dedicated to the protection of endangered species and wild places.

[1]Copenhagen deal headed for 3.5°C warming | 3 Dec 2009 <http://www.climateactiontracker.org/news.php>