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Better Late than Never. EPA Finds Global Warming is Dangerous

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Carroll Muffett, Deputy Campaigns Director of Greenpeace USA, issued the following statement today in response to the EPA's finding under the Clean Air Act that greenhouse gases endanger public health and welfare.

"It's about time.

"EPA's endangerment finding is a welcome sign that the Obama Administration is ready, willing and—more importantly—able to regulate greenhouse gases under the Clean Air Act if Congress fails to act.

"But today's announcement is also a testament to the success of industry in delaying real action to stop climate change. It took eleven states, ten years, two IPCC reports, two changes of presidency and one Supreme Court decision to reach the obvious conclusion that global warming endangers human health and welfare and EPA has a duty to do something about it.

"There is a clear lesson here for both the Administration and Congress as they craft a global warming bill this year: industry will exploit every ambiguity, every gap and every loophole in legislation to avoid real climate action as much and as long as possible. Fuzzy wording and big exemptions inserted to buy off industry support for a bill could delay real emission reductions for years or decades. The planet cannot afford that.

"We are optimistic that this decision will spur Congress to adopt strong and comprehensive legislation this year to stop global warming. But that legislation shouldn't replace existing authorities under the Clean Air Act or other laws with new standards that are potentially weaker. The ability to finally use the Clean Air Act as one tool in our fight against global warming was hard won, and should not be sacrificed lightly.

"Today's announcement ends a process begun 10 years ago, when a small coalition of states and environmental groups, including Greenpeace, petitioned and then sued the Agency to exercise its authority to regulate greenhouse gases under the Act. In 1999, the Clinton EPA under then-Administrator Carol Browner declared that the Agency had authority to regulate greenhouse gases under the Clean Air Act. The petition urged the Agency to exercise that authority."

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