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Assembly California Legislature

JUAN ARAMBULA
ASSEMBLYMEMBER, THIRTY-FIRST DISTRICT

COMMITTEES:

CHAIR
JOBS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
AND THE ECONOMY
BUDGET, SUB #4 - STATE ADMINISTRATION

MEMBER
BUDGET
HIGHER EDUCATION
REVENUE & TAXATION

June 4, 2007

Dr. Robert F. Sawyer, Chair
California Air Resources Board
1001 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Chairman Sawyer:

This letter concerns an early action item that the Air Resources Board is considering in its historic effort to curb emissions of greenhouse gases, pursuant to last year's Assembly Bill 32. The action would ban or restrict the use of retail refrigerant to recharge leaky automotive air conditioning systems. ARB has targeted this refrigerant, HFC-134a, because of its especially high global warming potential.

As you are no doubt aware, the retail refrigerant industry has objected to this early action item on the grounds that it would unduly burden the state's low-income population, which the industry believes constitutes the majority of its customer base. As the representative of an area with a large underserved population, I am sensitive to these concerns.

In fact, last year, with the low-income population in mind, I introduced AB 2788, which provided for a voluntary accelerated vehicle retirement program in the San Joaquin Valley. The bill provided incentives for low-income owners of old, high-polluting vehicles to retire those vehicles and purchase newer, cleaner vehicles instead. The bill recognized that some 50% of the criteria pollutant load from private automobiles comes from the dirtiest 10% of the vehicles.

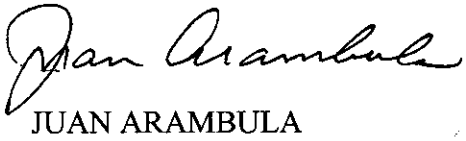
It appears that a similar logic applies to retail refrigerants. The oldest cars in the poorest condition are the ones whose air conditioners most need recharging. Like reductions in criteria pollutants, the best way to reduce the demand for retail refrigerants is to retire the aging vehicles themselves.

As part of its approach to combating greenhouse gas emissions, I believe the ARB should consider increasing its support for vehicle retirement. Older vehicles that consume more gasoline contribute a disproportionate share of carbon emissions. They are also more likely to require air conditioner recharging, with resulting emissions of HFC-134a. Accelerated vehicle retirement would best serve environmental justice goals if targeted toward low-income drivers in the state's dirtiest air basins.

ORIGINAL: Board Clerk
Copies: Executive Officer
Chair
Cogles by P2WAETS

If I can be of assistance to you and the ARB in developing more ambitious vehicle retirement programs, please contact Elliott Balch in my office at (916) 319-2031. I look forward to working with you to help our state lead the fight against global warming.

Sincerely,



JUAN ARAMBULA
Assemblymember, 31st District

cc: Theo Pahos, Kester Pahos Legislative and Regulatory Advocacy
Linda Adams, Secretary, California Environmental Protection Agency

JA:eb