

Contacts:

Jeremy McDiarmid, ENE (Environment Northeast), 617-429-0677, jmcdiarmid@env-ne.org

Sue Reid, Conservation Law Foundation, 617-669-2182, sreid@clf.org

Nathanael Greene, Natural Resources Defense Council, 212-254-0160, ngreene@nrdc.org

Jan Jarrett, PennFuture, 717-214-7920, jarrett@pennfuture.org

Rob Sargent, Environment America, 617-747-4317, rsargent@environmentamerica.org

For Immediate Release

Environmental Organizations See Progress Toward Cleaner Fuel Future in New Agreement Signed by Northeast and Mid-Atlantic States

December 30, 2009 -- Today eleven Northeast and mid-Atlantic states took another step toward reducing the region's dangerous dependence on oil and fostering the growth of clean fuel alternatives when their governors signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to develop a mandatory, multi-state Low Carbon Fuel Standard (LCFS).

The LCFS is a market-based, technology-neutral policy requiring gradual reductions in the carbon content of fuel. An LCFS will promote a regional market for cleaner alternative fuels, delivering greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions, local economic development, and technological innovation. California was the first state to adopt an LCFS in April 2009, requiring all distributors of transportation fuels to achieve 10% lower carbon intensity by 2020.

"An LCFS is a pivotal tool to reduce global warming pollution from cars and trucks and yet again provides a model from the Northeast for the federal government to follow," said Jeremy McDiarmid, Staff Attorney at ENE (Environment Northeast). McDiarmid noted that it was ten of these same eleven states that implemented the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) last year, the first mandatory cap and trade energy emissions reduction program in the country and now an important model for federal climate legislation under development.

Conservation Law Foundation (CLF), Environment America, Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), PennFuture and ENE have been actively promoting the development of the LCFS in the Northeast.

"Clean alternative fuels have the potential to be an economic engine in the Northeast while addressing the threat of climate change," said CLF Senior Attorney Sue Reid. "We need to adopt policies such as the LCFS that discourage high carbon fuels like tar sands and build markets for new, cleaner fuels, with meaningful choices for consumers. We are encouraged by the governors' commitment to move forward," Reid added.

"An LCFS must be a key strategy in our efforts to reduce the pollution that causes global warming as well as other health-threatening forms of air pollution," said Jan Jarrett, President and CEO of PennFuture. "The switch to cleaner fuels for our cars and trucks will help clean our air while it creates new choices to diversify and increase the reliability of our fuel supplies."

“The states are now well-positioned to address this key component of global warming pollution,” noted Nathanael Greene, Director of Renewable Energy Policy for NRDC. “We anticipate that this initiative will help speed the adoption of clean fuel alternatives such as electric vehicles, advanced biofuels and compressed natural gas, to name a few, producing significant reductions in carbon emissions from vehicle use throughout the region.”

“We are counting on officials to stand strong against special interests who are intent on blocking an effective program,” said Rob Sargent, Energy Program Director, Environment America. “We look forward to working with the states over the course of the next year to develop a program that sets a firm target for reducing the carbon intensity of fuels by 10% by 2020 and which includes provisions to ensure that the life-cycle greenhouse gas impacts of fuels are accounted for.”

ENE, CLF, NRDC, PennFuture, Environment America and other environmental advocacy organizations have joined other stakeholders in urging the governors to move with greater urgency, developing a program framework by the end of 2010 and committing to a 10% reduction in the carbon intensity of fuels. While the MOU stops short of laying out a program framework with specific targets, the groups see the MOU as a step forward, reaffirming and elevating the states’ commitment to implement a regional LCFS.

ENE (www.env-ne.org) is a non-profit organization that researches and advocates innovative policies that tackle our environmental challenges while promoting sustainable economies. ENE is at the forefront of state and regional efforts to combat global warming with solutions that promote clean energy, clean air and healthy forests.

The Conservation Law Foundation (www.clf.org) works to solve the most significant environmental challenges facing New England. CLF’s advocates use law, economics and science to create innovative strategies to conserve natural resources, protect public health and promote vital communities in our region. Founded, in 1966, CLF is a nonprofit, member-supported organization with offices in Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont.

PennFuture (www.pennfuture.org) is a statewide public interest membership organization. Working from the premise, “Every environmental victory grows the economy,” PennFuture has successfully advocated for landmark environmental legislation, including passage of the largest-ever environmental funding bond, investment in green energy and energy savings programs, the Alternative Energy Portfolio Standards Act, the Clean Vehicles Program and adoption of a regulation that restricts mercury pollution from coal-fired power plants. PennFuture has offices in Pittsburgh, Harrisburg, Philadelphia, Wilkes-Barre and West Chester, Pennsylvania.

The Natural Resources Defense Council (www.nrdc.org) is a national, nonprofit organization of scientists, lawyers and environmental specialists dedicated to protecting public health and the environment. Founded in 1970, NRDC has 1.3 million members and online activists, served from offices in Washington, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Beijing.

Environment America (www.environmentamerica.org) is a federation of state-based, citizen-funded environmental advocacy organizations in 28 states, including most of the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic

States. It combines independent research, practical ideas and tough-minded advocacy to overcome the opposition of powerful special interests and win real results for the environment.

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