



Statement by Senator Feinstein
On NRC Study on
California Smog Controls for Cars, Trucks and Small Engines

March 16, 2006

“The Natural Research Council released a Congressionally mandated report today that validated California’s pioneering efforts to adopt the toughest smog controls in the nation.

The report, by an 11-member committee of engineers, health and public policy experts, concluded that California still needs to adopt its own tougher emission standards for cars, trucks, and small engines such as lawnmowers, leaf blowers and chainsaws in order to combat chronic air pollution.

This is a positive affirmation of California’s role in reducing air emissions, and it provides strong vindication for efforts to protect the health of our state’s 37 million residents.

Quoting from the report: *‘California should continue its pioneering role in setting mobile-source emissions standards. The role will aid the state’s efforts to achieve air quality goals and will allow it to continue to be a proving ground for new emissions-control technologies that benefit California and the rest of the nation.’*

The committee also found: *‘Although a second set of standards imposes additional costs and complexity to manufacturers, the committee concludes that the California program has been beneficial overall.’*

The committee determined that the California Air Resources Board: *“often tightens mobile-source emissions standards earlier and to a greater extent than the Environmental Protection Agency.”*

On small engines, the committee said: *“California should continue its pioneering role when setting emissions standards for small engines to aid its efforts to improve air quality and be a proving ground for new emissions-control technologies.”*

Congress asked for this report in an agreement I reached in 2003 with Senator Christopher Bond of Missouri who had tried to block efforts by California to adopt strict rules on emissions from small engines in order to protect a company based in his state that manufactures these products.

Separately, I understand the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is expected to issue its own study this week on whether the new catalytic converters used to control emissions on lawnmowers, chainsaws and leafblowers are safe.

Congress, in another agreement I reached last year to fend off a separate effort by Senator Bond to block California's plan, required the EPA to finish this report by February 2.

A number of small engine manufacturers have publicly stated that no safety problems for consumers would be caused by the proposed air quality rule, and we expect the EPA's report will reach a similar conclusion.

Four of these manufacturers – Tecumseh, Honda, Kawasaki, and Kohler – have submitted letters to EPA stating that cleaner small engines including catalytic converters will not cause safety problems for consumers.”

Copies of the NRC report are available at:

<http://www4.nationalacademies.org/news.nsf/isbn/0309101514?OpenDocument>

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