



## Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy

February 17, 2021

Re: Meeting of the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources Policy and Legacy Finance

### **Testimony of Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy**

Dear Chair Ruud and members of the Environment and Natural Resources Policy and Legacy Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on Senate File 450. MCEA is a nonprofit organization with almost 50 years of experience using law and science to protect Minnesota's environment and the health of its people. MCEA strongly supports the Clean Cars standard as a way to reduce our state's contribution to climate change, increase consumer choice and improve public health. We support maintaining the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's (MPCA) authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions from passenger vehicles, and we oppose this bill.

As you are aware, Minnesota has fallen behind on its greenhouse gas emission reduction targets. The report released last month by the MPCA shows that we have only reduced statewide emissions by 8 percent since 2005.<sup>1</sup> Even worse, Minnesota's total emissions increased between 2016 and 2018. We need to do more to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.

With the transportation sector now the largest emitter in our state, and with passenger vehicles accounting for the majority of the sector's emissions<sup>2</sup>, adopting Clean Cars Minnesota is a critical step to meeting our Next Generation Energy Act goals. According to the Pollution Control Agency, the rule will reduce emissions by 8.4 million tons over the first 10 years of the program, avoiding 500 million dollars in climate damages over the same time period.<sup>3</sup> It will also reduce emissions of other air pollutants. Improved air quality will benefit human health and reduce health-related costs, particularly in lower income communities and communities of color.

Finally, by increasing the number of electric vehicles delivered for sale in the state, Clean Cars Minnesota will improve the number of choices consumers have when looking for a new car. Minnesotans deserve access to the same electric vehicles that are sold in other states, and this rule will make that possible. Meanwhile, households looking to purchase conventional cars, including gas-powered pickup trucks and SUVs, will still be able to do that. As noted by the MPCA in its Statement of Need and Reasonableness, in Clean Cars states like Maine and Vermont—which have each had these rules in place for several years—people purchase a similar amount of trucks and

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<sup>1</sup> Fawkes Char, Angela Hawkins, and Daniel Sullivan, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory 2005-2018*, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and Minnesota Department of Commerce, January 2021, at page 3, available at <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/lraq-1sy21.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* at page 5

<sup>3</sup> Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, *Statement of Need and Reasonableness*, December 2020, at page 9, available at <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/aq-rule4-10m.pdf>



## Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy

SUVs as Minnesotans.<sup>4</sup> In other words, the rule will increase the number of electric and fuel-efficient vehicles available to Minnesotans without compromising the availability of other types of vehicles.

Through the Clean Cars rulemaking process, we have an opportunity to take a look at the two different standards available to us—a rolled back federal standard, and the stronger standard set by California—and to choose which one is right for Minnesota. Removing the MPCA’s authority to regulate tailpipe emissions would mean eliminating that choice and leaving Minnesotans with the weaker standard.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important topic.

Sincerely,

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Climate Policy Analyst  
Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy

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<sup>4</sup> *Id.* at page 23



**Minnesota Center for  
Environmental Advocacy**