

Testimony before the US Environmental Protection Agency Hearing on Allowing  
California and Other States to Regulate Global Warming Pollutants Under the  
Clean Cars Program

Mayor Ross C. “Rocky” Anderson

May 30, 2007

As a nation, we face serious challenges from the alarming warming of our planet, due in large part to the burning of fossil fuels. Droughts, heat waves, hurricanes, floods, and other extreme weather events are projected to become more frequent and severe due to global warming. Rising sea levels will threaten major coastal populations around the world, creating millions of environmental refugees. Sir Nicholas Stern, the former chief economist at the World Bank, concluded in a 2006 report that inaction on climate change will lead to a twenty percent reduction in global gross domestic product.<sup>1</sup> According to a 2004 Pentagon report, abrupt climate change will exacerbate tensions between nations as supplies of food and water dwindle.<sup>2</sup> And refusing to enhance fuel-efficiency standards will deepen our nation’s abject reliance on dangerous, authoritarian petrostates, and subject our economy to continued destabilizing fuel price fluctuations.

Continuing our present level of fossil fuel dependence and failing to combat the effects of global warming will engender economic and social destabilization on a colossal scale, in the United States and especially in many poorer countries throughout the world that are far less able to adapt to changing climate patterns. The challenges we face compel us to take rapid, decisive action, at all levels of government, in the private sector, and in our individual lives to enhance efficiencies and curb global warming pollution. Efforts to reduce global warming pollution are particularly compelled in the US transportation sector, which by itself is responsible for more greenhouse gas emissions than the entire economy of any other nation except China.<sup>3</sup>

Unfortunately, Americans have learned that we cannot fully depend on federal regulation to meet our pressing energy and sustainability needs. Fuel economy standards for cars have not risen since 1990, and the average fuel economy for new passenger vehicles is lower today than it was in 1987, twenty

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<sup>1</sup> <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/6096594.stm>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.environmentaldefense.org/documents/3566\\_AbruptClimateChange.pdf](http://www.environmentaldefense.org/documents/3566_AbruptClimateChange.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.pewclimate.org/docUploads/ustransp%2Epdf>

years ago.<sup>4</sup> To even have the EPA consider regulation of global warming pollution required a lengthy legal battle and a ruling by the United States Supreme Court.

Efforts by California and eleven other states to regulate global warming pollution to a stricter standard than those required by the federal government deserve praise and celebration—not, as has been the case, obstruction, condemnation, and legal action. The twelve states attempting to implement this standard under the Clean Cars Program collectively represent forty percent of the US auto market. The EPA should allow these states to improve sustainability, air quality and reduce global warming pollution within their borders, which will have a salutary effect on fuel efficiency standards nationwide, and help our nation meet the tremendous challenges posed by global warming.

We have heard before about supposed deleterious effects projected to occur in implementing stricter regulations on auto emissions. History has judged these claims as unfounded. When the catalytic converter was introduced in the late 1970s, many in the auto industry predicted that mandating the inclusion of a catalytic converter would significantly reduce the performance and increase the price of automobiles. Today, every car sold in the United States has a catalytic converter, reducing nitrogen dioxide and carbon monoxide emissions by more than half per vehicle mile traveled. Meanwhile, vehicle performance has increased.<sup>5</sup>

States and cities serve as laboratories for innovation. In Salt Lake City we have turned the challenges of global warming and sustainability into enormous opportunities. In 2002, my administration committed Salt Lake City, in its municipal operations, to abide by at least the Kyoto goals in reducing carbon dioxide emissions by at least 21% below our 2001 baseline. In 2005, we far surpassed that goal, reducing global warming pollution by 31% seven years before the 2012 target date, with significant cost savings to taxpayers.

Utah Governor Jon Huntsman, Jr. has also recognized the importance of and opportunities attendant upon combating global warming. The State of Utah recently became a charter member of the Climate Registry, a multi-state and -tribe collaboration designed to establish a common greenhouse gas emissions reporting system. Utah also recently signed on the Western Regional Climate Action Initiative with six other states, to develop a regional market-based program to achieve significant reductions in global warming pollution.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.rff.org/Documents/RFF-Resources-159-CAFE.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Iowa State University, [Transportation and the Environment: Overview](#)

Salt Lake City and the State of Utah recognize the need for proactive efforts to achieve significant reductions in global warming pollution, including the regulation of emissions from automobiles, which are responsible for fifty percent of our local air pollution.<sup>6</sup> In the next one hundred years, average temperatures in Utah could increase by 3-4 degrees Fahrenheit in summer and 5-6 degrees Fahrenheit in winter.<sup>7</sup> Precipitation in summer is projected to decrease by ten percent. Since 90% of water use in our region comes from surface water, 75% of which is produced by melting snow, reduced snow pack resulting from higher temperatures will lower stream flows and lake levels—effects we are already beginning to observe.<sup>8</sup> The ski industry, which contributes enormously to the economy of our state, would also be dramatically impacted, as ski seasons are shortened and base villages are cut off from ski runs.

To avoid the disastrous consequences projected to occur from global warming, and to protect the health and welfare of their citizens, Utah, California, and other states must be allowed to pursue the effective standards on greenhouse gas emissions laid out in the Clean Car Program. Fostering local and state efforts to meet our sustainability and energy challenges will improve quality of life, have tremendous economic benefits, and pave the way to a brighter energy future.

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<sup>6</sup> [http://www.cleanair.utah.gov/what\\_do\\_you\\_know.htm](http://www.cleanair.utah.gov/what_do_you_know.htm)

<sup>7</sup> EPA, *Climate Change and Utah*. September 1998, 239-F-98-007Z

<sup>8</sup> Wager, Frederic, "Key Issues in the Rocky Mountain/Great Basin Regional Assessment." From *Acclimations*, July-August 1999