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## Pelosi Opposes EPA Clean Air Decision

By KEN THOMAS – Dec 21, 2007

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Speaker Nancy Pelosi told the Environmental Protection Agency on Friday that Congress would closely scrutinize its decision to reject California's request to tighten rules on greenhouse gas emissions.

Pelosi, D-Calif., said she strongly disagreed with the agency's rationale for the decision and would support an investigation by Rep. Henry Waxman, D-Calif. He is seeking all documents related to the state's request for a waiver to implement fuel efficiency rules for vehicles that it says will work faster than the federal government's.

"The actions of the EPA in denying the California request cannot help but raise serious questions about the support of the Bush administration for state efforts to safeguard the environment and the health of their residents," Pelosi wrote in a letter to EPA Administrator Stephen L. Johnson.

EPA's announcement Wednesday that it would bar California and at least 16 other states from regulating tailpipe emissions from new cars and trucks was swiftly criticized by state leaders and environmental groups. Several states have said they will appeal the decision.

Johnson said California's emissions limits were not needed because Congress approved energy legislation raising fuel efficiency standards nationwide to an average of 35 miles per gallon by 2020. California officials say their state's law was tougher and acted faster.

White House deputy press secretary Tony Fratto defended Johnson's decision Friday: "He made that based on what he thought was best for the nation in addressing this issue, and he pointed to the really significant policy changes that are going to come through from the energy bill that we signed last week."

"There's always a balance, and he (the president) does have a healthy respect for states' rights," Fratto added, "but these decisions need to be made in terms of what is best for the country."

It was the first time the agency had completely denied a Clean Air Act waiver request from California after granting more than 50. The state adopted tailpipe standards in 2004 that would have required car makers to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30 percent in new cars and light trucks by 2016.

Under the Clean Air Act, California needed a waiver to put in place the rules, and other states could then adopt them, too.

Twelve other states — Connecticut, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont and Washington — have adopted the standards. The governors of Arizona, Colorado, Florida and Utah have said they also plan to adopt them. The rules are under consideration in Iowa.

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