

WA's Clean Car Standard No Longer "Idling"

Local News

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SEATTLE, Wash. - Washington has had a "Clean Car Act" since 2005, requiring that new vehicles sold in the state meet stricter tailpipe emissions standards, starting with the 2009 model year. The law has been in suspension, however, because the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) didn't allow states to use their own standards - that is, until this week.

The EPA now says it will allow California to put its "Cleaner Car" rules into place. Washington and Oregon had adopted the same rules, so they went on hold with California's. Ross Macfarlane, senior adviser with the Seattle-based group *Climate Solutions*, says it would be impossible to meet the state's greenhouse gas reduction goals without limiting vehicle pollution.

"Having these more stringent tailpipe standards is something that we're already counting on, to be able to achieve those goals. Being able to have those in place quickly is very critical in terms of our ability to reduce emissions from this very important sector."

Washington and Oregon were even part of a lawsuit a few years ago, to try to force the EPA to make a decision on allowing states to set their own tailpipe emissions standards. Macfarlane says it's not just clean air at stake - it's also less dependence on foreign oil, and better gas mileage.

"The reason there's a need for these kind of standards is that the current fleet of motor vehicles sold in America today gets worse gas mileage and emits more greenhouse gases per mile than the Model T's that were sold back in the 1920s."

About half of all the greenhouse gas pollution in Washington is from vehicles. Macfarlane says the next step is a federal "clean car" standard that applies to all states, but that won't go into effect for a few years. In the meantime, the state rules take effect, beginning with cars made in model year 2009.