

**State and Territorial Air Pollution Program Administrators
Association of Local Air Pollution Control Officials
American Lung Association
Natural Resources Defense Council**

May 20, 2002

Hon. Christine Todd Whitman
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Whitman:

As members of the Clean Diesel Independent Review Panel, we are writing to urge you to reject any effort to change the composition of the panel or alter its mission as set forth in the recent letter of invitation by EPA Assistant Administrator Jeffrey R. Holmstead.

The panel, which is scheduled to hold its first meeting on May 23, 2002, includes a very broad cross section of affected interests, including representatives of the automobile industry, diesel engine manufacturers, both large and small refiners, emission control system manufacturers, fuel distributors, technology vendors, state and local air agencies and public health and environmental organizations.

Mr. Holmstead has stated that the purpose of the panel is to review the progress of (1) manufacturers of diesel engines and emission control systems in developing technology to reduce engine exhaust pollutants and (2) the fuel industry in developing and demonstrating technologies to effectively lower the sulfur level of diesel fuel. The panel is expected to report its findings to you by mid-September of this year.

We want to make it very clear, as we have previously told your chief of staff, that we have full confidence in the agency's ability to conduct its own fair and impartial internal technical review of the highway diesel sulfur rule and related heavy-duty engine standards. As a result, we see no pressing need to convene an "independent" panel to duplicate the agency's efforts. We believe our view was bolstered by the recent decision by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, which rejected industry challenges to the standards.

Despite our reservations about the need for an independent panel, we have agreed to serve on it in the interests of cooperating fully with you. However, we vehemently oppose any effort to alter the composition of this panel or change its mission. We would appreciate a clear signal from you that you agree with us on this matter.

Sincerely,

S. William Becker
STAPPA/ALAPCO

Paul B. Billings
American Lung Association

Richard Kassel
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cc: Jeffery R. Holmstead (EPA OAR)
Margo Oge (EPA OAR OTAQ)