

**EDITOR'S NOTE: Sen. Cardin writes periodic columns for Maryland publications. The following column concerning Maryland's right to reduce greenhouse gas emissions may be of interest to your readers. Please contact Susan Sullam at [susan\\_sullam@cardin.senate.gov](mailto:susan_sullam@cardin.senate.gov) if you have any questions.**

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*PRECEDENCE: Senator Cardin is a member of five committees: Foreign Relations, Judiciary, Environment and Public Works, Budget and Small Business. His web site is: [cardin.senate.gov](http://cardin.senate.gov)*

**MARYLAND HAS THE RIGHT  
TO SET AUTO EMISSIONS STANDARDS  
By U.S. Senator Benjamin L. Cardin**

The connection between global warming and greenhouse gas emissions is one that scientists clearly understand and they are concerned Maryland and 19 other states also understand the growing threat to our environment and our health, and have taken steps to reduce the harmful carbon dioxide emissions that spew from millions of vehicles a day.

Maryland and the other states have applied to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for what has become known as the "California Waiver." This waiver would allow Maryland and the other states to set more stringent emissions standards than EPA proposes. Maryland wants to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 30% for all cars in trucks sold in our state by 2016.

Unfortunately, after a two-year delay, in February EPA Administrator Stephen Johnson ignored the advice of his agency's own scientists and legal counsel by denying this waiver to Maryland and the other states.

EPA's rejection of the waiver request is the first denial in 50 applications and is without merit. In denying the waiver, EPA has lost its credibility and appears to be an agency in crisis. This decision must be reversed and I have co-sponsored the *Reducing Global Warming Pollution for Vehicles Act* to allow states to set their own auto emissions standards.

We need to act quickly to reduce dangerous greenhouse gas emissions. According to Dr. Donald Boesch of the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Studies, Maryland is particularly vulnerable to the effects of sea level rise, a result of global warming. I am a member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, and Dr. Boesch has testified before the Committee that current computer simulations project a rise in the Chesapeake Bay, inundating much of our current shoreline.

There also is increasing evidence of the dangers of greenhouse gas emissions. According to the National Climate Data Center, global annual temperatures are now about one-degree Fahrenheit warmer than at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

We already are feeling the effects of global warming. The Blackwater Wildlife Refuge on the Eastern Shore has lost thousands of acres of wetlands, in part due to rising tides. We are also witnessing a serious loss of important underwater grasses and an increasing number of dead zones and fish kills as the water becomes less oxygenated due to higher temperatures.

EPA's mission is to protect the environment, but in denying this waiver it has shirked its responsibilities. This is too important an issue to ignore. Marylanders – and all Americans – have a right to clean air and it's time to force the EPA to live up to its duty.

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4/08