January 15, 2013

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States of America
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Re: Tier 3 motor vehicle and low sulfur gasoline standards

Dear Mr. President:

We, the undersigned Governors and Mayor, are writing to strongly urge you to improve human health and stimulate job creation by adopting the "Tier 3" motor vehicle and low sulfur gasoline standards as soon as possible. As elected leaders, we are charged with protecting the public health and welfare of our citizens while supporting their economic well-being. Since the first Clean Air Act in 1970, we have improved air quality while growing the national economy at the same time, but we have yet to achieve our shared goal of clean air for all our citizens.

We have demonstrated success at reducing ground-level ozone pollution by reducing emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx), a precursor to ozone formation. However, NOx emissions from vehicles must continue to be significantly reduced in order to attain and maintain the ozone air quality standard throughout the nation. Failure to meet the ozone standard results in approximately 200 additional deaths and $2 billion in health related economic impacts annually in the Northeast alone. Throughout the US, NOx emissions from vehicles contribute significantly to the formation of fine particles, which cause tens of thousands of premature deaths, hospital admissions, and lost work and schools days each year. NOx emissions from vehicles also contribute to the formation of haze and acid deposition in treasured places like the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area.

EPA has contemplated the Tier 3 rule since 2008. Tier 3 will substantially reduce air pollutants that are responsible for asthma attacks, chronic lung diseases, heart attacks, and premature mortality. A recent study by Navigant Economics stated that the benefit of preventing these ailments has an estimated value of $5-$6 billion annually by 2020 and $10-$11 billion annually by 2030. And low sulfur gasoline will enable deep and almost immediate pollution reductions from existing vehicles, a significant additional benefit not easily achieved on such a short time scale any other way. This is the best and least costly next step we can take to improve air quality in many areas of the US.

The world is moving towards lower sulfur gasoline and cleaner cars. Investments to meet Tier 3 in the U.S. can invigorate the competitiveness of U.S. refineries and add momentum to the revival of our domestic motor vehicle and emission control manufacturing sectors. This in turn keeps and creates jobs in our country.

We are confident that refineries and automobile manufacturers will continue to find new and innovative ways to meet the new requirements. And by harmonizing Tier 3 with standards already adopted by the State of California, manufacturers and refiners will harness the economies of scale associated with improving current technology nationwide.

We respectfully request that EPA promulgate the Tier 3/low sulfur gasoline rule as early as practicable in 2013. The health and economic well-being of our citizens calls for prompt action, and we stand ready to assist you in moving this important program forward.

Sincerely,

Governor Dannel P. Malloy
Connecticut

Governor Martin O'Malley
Maryland

Governor Deval Patrick
Massachusetts

Governor John Kitzhaber
Oregon

Governor Lincoln Chafee
Rhode Island

Governor Peter Shumlin
Vermont

Mayor Vincent C. Gray
District of Columbia