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ADEQ Begins Formal Rule-Making Process to Cut Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Vehicles

PHOENIX (Nov. 26, 2007) -- Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) Director Steve Owens announced today that ADEQ has begun its formal rule-making process to adopt a clean-car program with new standards to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from passenger vehicles.

The new rules are being developed pursuant to an Executive Order on climate change issued last year by Gov. Janet Napolitano. The Arizona Climate Change Advisory Group (CCAG) unanimously recommended that Arizona adopt the new GHG reduction standards.

During 1990-2005 GHG emissions in Arizona grew by 56 percent, the fastest rate of growth in the country. If unchecked, Arizona's GHG emissions are projected to grow by 140 percent between 1990-2020 and by 200 percent between 1990-2040. Roughly 40 percent of Arizona's GHG emissions come from vehicles.

"This is an important step toward reducing greenhouse gas emissions in Arizona and is a critical element in our effort to address climate change," ADEQ Director Owens said. "Our goal is to have a formal draft rule proposed for public comment by the end of this year or early next year, and to have the final rule approved by late spring or early summer."

The rules will apply to vehicles beginning with the 2011 model year.

Arizona's rules will be based on the Clean Car program adopted by the State of California. States are authorized under the federal Clean Air Act to adopt California's vehicle emissions standards.

In addition to California, 11 other states have adopted the California GHG vehicle standards. They are Connecticut, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont and Washington.

Along with Arizona, at least four other states – Colorado, Florida, New Mexico and Utah – also have announced plans to adopt the California GHG vehicle standards.