September 3, 2008

Sacramento, California

United States Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works:

Briefing on the Federal Transportation Program

Testimony of Larry F. Greene

Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District

Contact info: lgreene@airquality.org; 916.874.4803; www.airquality.org

Senator Boxer and esteemed guests:

Good afternoon. My name is Larry Greene. I am the Executive Director of the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District, one of 35 local air districts in the state of California. The primary mission of our agency and its 104 employees is to protect public health by reducing air pollution through a range of programs including voluntary incentive programs, public education, promoting clean and healthy transportation alternatives and by implementing state and federal regulations.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. In my brief comments I will highlight joint opportunities and challenges facing the air quality and transportation communities.

The Sacramento region, comprised of six counties with a combined population of over 2 million people, is designated by the federal government as non-attainment for ozone and will soon be designated as non-attainment for fine particles. In Sacramento, the major driver for non-attainment (and related public health impacts) is emissions from the transportation sector including trucks, cars, planes, trains, and roadway construction equipment. In 2008, for the two air pollutants contributing to ozone formation, 89% of the nitrous oxide emissions and 63% of the reactive organic gas emissions are from the transportation sector. Transportation is also the major contributor of regional air toxics emissions including diesel particulates, formaldehyde and benzene. Additionally, the state of California estimates that almost 40% of the statewide greenhouse gas emissions come from transportation.

In Sacramento, many thousands of people are burdened by the health impacts of these emissions, as reflected by incidences of cardio-pulmonary diseases, bronchitis, asthma, increased rates of hospital admissions, missed work or school days and more. Therefore, minimizing or mitigating

pollution attributable to the transportation sector constitutes a significant portion of our agency's activities. Key programs we are implementing include:

- **Partnering with EPA, CARB, and SACOG to provide over $121 million dollars since 1998 in incentive programs for owners of heavy-duty trucks, construction or agricultural equipment, locomotives and even boats to modernize fleets, install exhaust purification equipment or acquire low-emission and alternative fuel vehicles**
- **Providing funds for the installation of alternative fuel infrastructure including Ethanol 85, Compressed Natural Gas and Liquid Natural Gas**
- **Providing funds to upgrade passenger and freight locomotives and switch engines with cleaner engines and advanced idling control equipment**
- **Funding bicycle parking facilities**
- **Educating the public through *Spare the Air*, an extensive outreach program to alert the public regarding when to alter their travel choices on poor air quality days**
- **Implementing an active review process for local developments to reduce associated emissions and improve project design**

All of these programs rely on funding and program direction from a variety of sources, whether local, state or federal. Enhancing the structure and design of the federal transportation program has the potential to greatly benefit our local programs and to improve public health.

We have the following recommendations:

First, the federal transportation program should bolster regional planning efforts, especially as they serve to integrate land use and transportation planning. Our agency has been pleased to partner with SACOG on their regional Blueprint with which you are by now quite familiar. The SACOG Blueprint offers an outstanding win-win example for the rest of the nation. It shows how to decrease congestion and greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality by reducing the length and frequency of automobile trips through creating development patterns conducive to increased use of transit, walking and bicycling. Moreover with the cooperative efforts of our regional local governments, the Blueprint vision is being implemented in current local land use decisions and was the matrix upon which the recent regional Metropolitan Transportation Plan was based.

Second, as the federal government considers how to develop appropriate performance measures, it should establish national transportation goals related to reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT), reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving air quality and bettering public health, especially as measured by safety.

Third, policy and funding guidance and directives should support these goals. A "fix-it-first" emphasis will strengthen existing communities and repair crumbling or obsolete facilities before they fail. We should eliminate funding formula biases, such as different local match requirements, that favor highways over transit. An augmentation of operating funds for transit systems is badly needed, as our local transit agencies are struggling to maintain existing transit routes and respond to growing demand.

Fourth, the complete streets principle-- that roads be planned, designed and constructed to provide safe and convenient travel for all modes-- should become federal law and apply to all projects. It is embodied by our own Congresswoman Doris Matsui's H.R. 5951, known as the Safe and Complete Streets Act of 2008, and Senator Tom Harkin's S. 2686. In Sacramento, over one-fifth of all traffic-related fatalities are pedestrians or bicyclists. The risk

associated with these modes discourages their use and contributes to worsened air quality and the emerging obesity crisis.

Fifth and finally, programs directly related to air quality such as the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program should be targeted to regions with the most serious air quality problems.

Working together with you, Senator Boxer, the transportation and air quality communities can develop a federal transportation program that supports our nation's economy while improving public health and the quality of life in our communities. I greatly appreciate the opportunity to share this perspective with you. Thank you.