

July, 1989

MASSPIRG

Contact: Jenny Carter

MASSACHUSETTS PUBLIC INTEREST RESEARCH GROUP

FACT SHEET: AN ACT TO IMPROVE AIR QUALITY H.6203
Chief Sponsors: Rep. David Cohen and Sen. John Oliver

The Problem: Unhealthy Air Quality

Massachusetts' air pollution problems are far from solved. In fact, Massachusetts' air quality actually deteriorated in 1987 and in 1988; this year the commonwealth violated the federal Clean Air Act health limits on at least 30 days. Cities that have suffered especially severe problems include Boston, New Bedford, Springfield, and Worcester. Unfortunately, however, not even suburban and rural areas are spared. Last June, a rural monitoring station near Quabbin Reservoir showed levels approaching twice the level considered unhealthy by federal standards.

Particularly problematic pollutants regulated under the federal Clean Air Act are ground-level ozone and carbon monoxide (CO). Ozone, commonly known as smog, is the product of photochemical reactions of hydrocarbon (HC) and nitrogen oxides (NOx). Short term exposure to these pollutants can cause shortness of breath, chest pain, throat irritation and wheezing, even in healthy persons, while long term exposure can result in death.

The Auto's Contribution to the Problem

Motor vehicles are the single most significant source of carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons, nitrogen oxides and many toxic compounds across Massachusetts and the United States. Motor vehicle emissions are also credited with contributing to acid rain, extensive crop damage and global warming. According to a Northeast States for Coordinated Air Use Management (NESCAUM) report, without additional motor vehicle controls, unhealthy air quality will prevail in the Northeast for the foreseeable future.

The Auto Emissions Reduction Solution

To ensure that new Massachusetts' motor vehicles reduce their pollution to the greatest extent allowed under the federal Clean Air Act, this bill requires DEP to adopt California's stringent auto emissions standards and superior warranty, auditing, and recall provisions similar to California's. In addition, to protect Massachusetts auto dealers from consumer border hopping, the bill will prohibit registration of most new motor vehicles which do not meet the new standard. According to the NESCAUM report, adoption of the current California program would reduce cars' HC, CO, and NOx emissions by 23%, 25% and 39% respectively, and if California adopts more stringent standards, as expected, the reductions will reach up to 50%. The beauty of adopting the California program is that the technology already exists to accomplish these reductions.

The current price difference between a "California car" and a similar federal model without California controls ranges from \$0-\$100 -- less than a pair of hubcaps. States seriously considering adopting the California program include most of the Northeast states plus Colorado and Texas.



City of Cambridge

2.

IN CITY COUNCIL

September 11, 1989

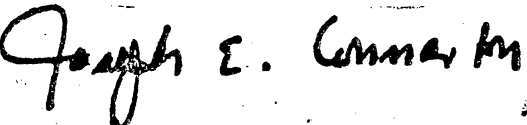
MAYOR VELLUCCI

- WHEREAS: Communities across the commonwealth, both urban and rural, are experiencing unlawful and health threatening air quality; and
- WHEREAS: Automobiles are the single largest contributors of ozone smog, acid rain causing nitrogen oxide, and carbon monoxide; and
- WHEREAS: Simple technology is in use in California to dramatically reduce automobile emissions; and
- WHEREAS: Under the federal Clean Air Act, Massachusetts' only option to reduce automobile emission is to adopt California emissions standards; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED: That I, Alfred E. Vellucci, Mayor of the City of Cambridge, endorses the Clean Air Bill which will require that new automobiles registered in Massachusetts comply with California's stringent automobile standards.

In City Council September 11, 1989.
Adopted by the affirmative vote of nine members.
Attest:- Joseph E. Connarton, City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST:-


Joseph E. Connarton, City Clerk.

Order #2

S-583

M.Vellucci re: resolutions endorsing the
Clean Air Bill, which will require that
new automobiles registered in Massachusetts
comply with California's stringent auto-
mobile standards.

In City Council,

September 11, 1989

Order adopted