



News from Congressman

Tom Lantos

**12th Congressional District of California
San Mateo/San Francisco**

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FOR INFORMATION CALL

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Lantos Joins California House Delegation to Urge EPA Action on Cheaper, Cleaner Fuels

Washington, DC – Congressman Tom Lantos (D-San Mateo, San Francisco) today urged Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Michael Leavitt to grant a waiver of the Clean Air Act's ethanol/MTBE mandate for California that would let Californians use cleaner blends of gasoline while saving money at the pump.

"I am proud to join California's congressional delegation to press the EPA to consider a proposal that makes sense for California's environment and its economy," Lantos said. "We must do all that we can to preserve our natural resources, particularly in the face of constant efforts by the Bush Administration to roll back decades of legislative advances in environmental protection."

Lantos and 51 of the 53 members of the California delegation signed a letter to Leavitt supporting Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's February 2 waiver request, which is the latest step in a five-year-long effort by the state to permit the sale of cleaner-burning gasoline without oxygenates such as MTBE and ethanol.

On September 15, 1999, the EPA's Blue Ribbon Panel on Oxygenate in Gasoline reported that "within California, lifting the oxygenate requirement will result in greater flexibility to maintain and enhance emission reductions, particularly as California pursues new formulation requirements for gasoline." Last year, the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals vacated the EPA's 2001 decision to deny a waiver, but the EPA still has not granted the waiver request.

MTBE, a frequently used oxygenate, has been banned in California because of the danger it poses to water resources. If California is unable to obtain the much-needed waiver, the state effectively will be required to rely on ethanol in order to meet its fuel needs. The California Air Resources indicates that extensive use of ethanol is complicated and costly, and may endanger California's ability to meet federal ozone standards.

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