

Washington, DC - Rep. Peter Welch (D-VT) issued the following statement in reaction to new documents and testimony that show that Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) career staff unanimously supported granting California's request for a waiver to enforce its greenhouse gas emissions standards for cars and trucks. EPA Administrator Stephen Johnson also supported granting the petition, according to the report, until he communicated with the White House. Johnson is testifying before Welch and the Oversight Committee today.

"The Environmental Protection Agency's decision defied science, defied the states, and defied common sense. This report demonstrates unacceptable political interference by this administration and complete disregard for the public interest. The evidence of global warming is overwhelming. Consumers deserve higher mileage standards as they bear the burden of record fuel prices. Since the Bush administration clearly won't lead, it's time they get out of the way."

The Oversight Committee's report can be found [here](#) .

Among the evidence of the EPA's political interference, the report documents that:

- When Administrator Johnson polled EPA experts for their opinions on granting a waiver not a single staffer argued that the California waiver should be denied, according to five EPA staff who were in the meeting.
- The EPA staff interviewed by the Committee was unable to identify any agency documents that argued in favor of denial prior to December 19, 2007, the day California's petition was denied.
- EPA Associate Deputy Administrator Jason Burnett testified that Administrator Johnson's preference for a full or partial grant of the waiver did not change until after he communicated with the White House.
- During his deposition, when Burnett was asked to identify the White House officials who spoke with Administrator Johnson and to describe the substance of their communications with Administrator Johnson, he informed the Committee that he had been directed not to answer any questions about the involvement of the White House in the decision to reject California's petition.

Welch is an author of H.R. 5560, the Right to Clean Vehicles Act, which would to overturn the waiver denial. In September, Welch rallied 89 members of Congress to urge the EPA to promptly grant California a waiver to adopt stricter emissions standards, allowing other states to

follow its lead. Earlier in the year, Welch led a successful effort to block a proposal being considered by the House Energy and Commerce Committee that would have prohibited states like Vermont from adopting auto emissions standards that are tougher than those imposed by the federal government.