

## **CLEAN TEA**

### **S. 575 - Clean Low-Emission Affordable New Transportation Efficiency Act**

#### **The Challenge:**

This legislation recognizes that the United States cannot meet its climate change goals without addressing emissions from the transportation sector. Transportation is responsible for about one-third of greenhouse gas emissions; passenger automobiles and light trucks alone contribute 21 percent. The transportation sector must be responsible for a proportionate amount of the solution.

#### **Why Do we Need Legislation?**

Since 1980, the number of miles Americans drive has grown three times faster than the U.S. population, and almost twice as fast as vehicle registrations. Although new vehicle technology and low carbon fuel can substantially reduce emissions from automobiles and light trucks, these gains are likely to be offset by continuing growth in vehicle miles traveled. It is critical that legislation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions also provides people with low-carbon transportation options through community design and transportation alternatives.

#### **What Would the Legislation Do?**

CLEAN TEA is predicated on the adoption of a comprehensive climate change bill that would create a cap and trade program. Under such a system, overall greenhouse gas emissions would be capped and polluters would have to acquire credits at auction to emit greenhouse gases. Under CLEAN TEA, 10 percent of the funding generated through this auction would be used to create a more efficient transportation system and lower greenhouse gas emissions through strategies like:

- Funding new or expanded transit or passenger rail;
- Updating zoning to support transportation plans; and
- Making neighborhoods safer for bikes and pedestrians.

In order to be eligible for the funding authorized by this legislation, cities and state departments of transportation would have to review their transportation plans and determine how they could reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The bill then provides federal funding for projects in those transportation plans to be distributed to states and localities based on the expected reductions in greenhouse gas emissions in each plan. States and cities with more ambitious plans would receive greater funding.

#### **Who Supports the Legislation?**

CLEAN-TEA was introduced in the Senate by Senators Carper and Specter. It is cosponsored by Sens. Lautenberg, Cardin, Merkley, Gillibrand, Bennet, and Bill Nelson.

Bill summary from the Office of Senator Tom Carper. Please contact Paul Schmid, 224-2441, for more information.