

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

November 13, 2017

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Northeast and Mid-Atlantic States Seek Public Input As They Move Toward a Cleaner Transportation Future

Today eight jurisdictions participating in the Transportation and Climate Initiative released a statement seeking public input on potential policy approaches to bring about a cleaner and more resilient transportation future across the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic region. Participants include: Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, Rhode Island and Vermont.

The participating states recognize the region faces serious environmental and transportation challenges that can best be addressed by tapping into America's greatest strengths, including a skilled workforce, innovation, public-private partnerships and the power of markets. For the past two years, these states have been exploring policy approaches to create the clean transportation system that the region needs to meet today's and tomorrow's challenges.

With today's announcement, these states are launching a series of listening sessions. Starting in the fall of 2017 and continuing into 2018, states will engage communities and businesses in conversations that explore the opportunities and challenges involved with moving toward a cleaner transportation future, as well as the economic and environmental benefits that could be achieved from coordinated state action.

Joint Statement from CT, DE, DC, MD, MA, NY, RI and VT:

Our region faces serious environmental and transportation challenges.

Increased carbon emissions from all sectors contribute to the climate change that threatens the health and welfare of our residents and communities. While a diversified transportation system is essential to support the region's economic growth and prosperity, the transportation sector also remains the largest contributor to carbon emissions. At the same time, much of the region's transportation infrastructure was constructed prior to the Eisenhower Interstate Era.

These issues can be addressed by tapping into America's greatest strengths.

The renewal of the transportation system affords unprecedented opportunities to provide cleaner alternatives, alleviate congestion, reduce air pollution, create jobs, and rebuild in a way that is more resilient and less susceptible to extreme weather events. The region's highly skilled workforce, educational institutions, and capacity for innovation, along with working with the private sector, position us well to advance technology solutions to mitigate harmful carbon emissions. With the adoption of smart

policies and deployment of new technologies, we can speed the implementation of innovative transportation solutions that significantly reduce congestion and pollution, including preparing for a future with zero-emission vehicles and enhancing the availability of a diverse portfolio of alternative transportation services including high-quality public transportation, walking and biking.

For the past two years, our states have explored policy approaches to create the lower-carbon transportation system that the region needs to meet today's and tomorrow's challenges.

The Transportation Climate Initiative was formed to specifically develop regionally-based strategies and policies to mitigate the impacts of carbon and other harmful emissions being emitted from the transportation sector. We recognize that a regional solution that reflects the regional nature of the transportation system will be more beneficial to our residents and businesses. TCI member states are hearing innovative ideas from around the region and country; have commissioned analyses identifying potential opportunities, options, and benefits of acting; and have learned about potential market-based carbon mitigation strategies.

Our states are now initiating a public conversation about these opportunities and challenges, the benefits we would all like to see in the transportation system of the future, and the policies that will enable us to realize this future together.

We are casting a broader net to obtain input on strategies our states should consider to reduce carbon emissions from the transportation sector; modernize the transportation system and increase investments to support zero-emission vehicle goals and carbon emissions reduction. Beginning in the fall of 2017, and continuing into 2018, we are hosting listening sessions throughout the region to help us understand your vision, ideas, and solutions and obtain your input on the potential policies we have identified. We will work hard to engage communities whose voices may not have been heard in the past, to help ensure that solutions we identify will benefit all of our residents and businesses and that we are harnessing the innovation and leadership that is a hallmark of our region.

We need continued leadership to jointly develop cleaner transportation technologies in the region, create the jobs that come from innovation here, and lead in addressing the challenges of carbon reduction and climate change.

MA

“The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is committed to advancing our nation-leading record on climate action, clean energy innovation and environmental protection by working to aggressively reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector,” said Matthew Beaton, Secretary of Massachusetts Energy and Environmental Affairs. “Following a statewide climate change and transportation listening tour, we are proud to join with other Northeastern states in a region-wide public conversation about how we can further combat climate change and build the transportation system of tomorrow.”

"The Massachusetts Department of Transportation works closely with the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs to develop comprehensive strategies for addressing transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions," said Transportation Secretary and CEO Stephanie Pollack. "We look forward to working with our regional partners to build upon the listening sessions we have already held across the Commonwealth to produce even more ideas about how we can accelerate adoption of zero emission vehicles and promote walking, biking and transit."

NY

"Governor Cuomo is driving nation-leading efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and meet—and exceed—international and state climate goals, said Basil Seggos, Commissioner of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. "The Governor recognizes that transportation is the largest contributor of climate pollution in our state and is ready to act. While the federal government continues to shrug off its responsibility to address the threat of our changing climate, we are accelerating progress toward a cleaner and more resilient transportation system. We look forward to working with our state partners and the business community to achieve our goals."

CT

"Significantly reducing carbon emissions from the transportation sector is critical to achieving Connecticut's ambitious climate goals," said Rob Klee, Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. "Recognizing this, our state has become a national leader in developing policies and programs that support the expanded use of zero emission vehicles and public transportation. The Connecticut Hydrogen and Electric Automobile Purchase Rebate program to date has helped to put over 1,900 ZEVs on the road, and our early efforts to reduce range anxiety by investing in publically available charging stations demonstrate our long-term commitment to a low-carbon transportation future. We look forward to continuing to seek stakeholder input on effective strategies to reduce emissions in the transportation sector through our Comprehensive Energy Strategy, the Governor's Council on Climate Change, and the Transportation Climate Initiative."

MD

"Maryland is a leader in fighting climate change, and this bipartisan, regional effort to address greenhouse gases in the transportation sector is a great opportunity to share our approaches and learn from others," said Ben Grumbles, Maryland Secretary of the Environment.

DE

"Vehicles and vehicle emissions travel across state boundaries, and so must our climate-mitigation efforts, said Shawn M. Garvin, Secretary of the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control. "Partnerships like the Transportation Climate Initiative are essential to building a cleaner and more resilient transportation system. We look forward to working with the TCI member states to enhance the public dialogue about a clean, low-carbon transportation future and take meaningful actions."

RI

"We're proud to join our partners in the region to grow the clean energy economy and improve our environment," said Janet Coit, Director of the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management. "As a coastal state, Rhode Island is uniquely vulnerable to the effects of climate

change. As home to the nation's first and still only offshore windfarm, we're taking bold steps to ensure the safety of both our citizens and our 400 miles of coastline. Here in Rhode Island, we've set an ambitious goal to double the number of green jobs by 2020 and we're making it easier for people to install solar. But we know that our efforts to fight climate change have a greater effect when we work together. That's why I endorsed RGGI, a bipartisan, regional agreement to reduce carbon emissions by approximately 65% by 2030. It's imperative that we act now to reduce emissions and find innovative solutions to the challenge of climate change. We're making progress, but there's still work that needs to be done, especially in the transportation sector. We look forward to working with other states on how best to move forward to mitigate the impacts of climate change that we feel today and prevent further damage tomorrow."

VT

"In the absence of a national plan to combat climate change, Vermont and our northeast partners will continue to lead and listen as we work together to create region-wide approaches to transforming the transportation sector and reducing our greenhouse gas emissions," said Peter Walke, Deputy Secretary of the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. "Working with our neighboring states we have made tremendous progress in the power generation sector, but forty-two percent of Vermont's emissions comes from the transportation sector. As the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative has proven, the states are stronger when we work together to reach shared goals."

DC

"Cities and states in the U.S. and municipalities around the world are stepping up to act on climate change, and the District of Columbia is no exception," said Tommy Wells, Director of the District of Columbia's Department of Energy and Environment. "And we know that meeting the District's goals to cut greenhouse gas emissions will require regional partnerships to invest in a clean, reliable, and resilient transportation system."

Information about this 2017 statement, earlier TCI statements, initial stakeholder dialogues, and relevant analysis by the Georgetown Climate Center and Cambridge Systematics can be found on the Transportation and Climate Initiative website.

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