



February 1, 2021

Dear Governor Northam and Members of the Virginia General Assembly:

**As employers with operations and investments in Virginia, we write today to express our support for policies to accelerate the Commonwealth's transition to low-emission and zero-emission vehicles.** Clean vehicle standards are particularly effective tools for strengthening the market for clean cars and ensuring consumers have access to clean vehicles at dealers throughout the Commonwealth. During a time of unprecedented health and economic crises, adoption of clean vehicle standards presents an opportunity for the Commonwealth to curb harmful vehicle pollutant emissions and provide much-needed financial savings for Virginia households and businesses.

The Advanced Clean Cars (ACC) program has been adopted or is in the process of being adopted by 17 states and the District of Columbia. The full ACC Program includes Low-Emission Vehicle (LEV) standards, which reduce greenhouse gas and smog-forming pollutant emissions from light-duty vehicles, and the Zero-Emission Vehicles (ZEV) program, which requires auto manufacturers to offer a proportion of clean cars, such as battery electric, plug-in hybrid, and fuel cell vehicles, for sale. The ZEV program has been proven to drive electric vehicle sales and availability: states that have adopted the ZEV Program represent nearly [63% of all U.S. electric vehicle sales](#) despite constituting under [30% of the total market](#) for light-duty vehicles. Meanwhile, in Virginia, electric vehicles currently make up only [1.2% of all vehicle sales](#). By increasing the availability and development of more-efficient vehicle models in Virginia, the ACC program would enable a more competitive marketplace and provide access to clean, cost-saving vehicles for the benefit of all Virginians.

More efficient vehicles save money. Federal fuel economy standards saved Virginia \$870 million through 2017 and were on track to save households an additional [\\$2,900 in fuel costs](#) by 2030. Given the recent weakening of these standards at the federal level, these are cost-saving opportunities that our employees, drivers and customers will miss out on unless the Commonwealth adopts clean vehicle standards of its own. Even if the federal standards are restored for later model years, adopting the ACC program enables states to lock in greater near-term fuel cost savings and clean vehicle choices for consumers as well as necessary reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants.

Clean vehicle standards are an important tool for businesses like ours to reduce operating costs while making progress toward goals to reduce our carbon footprints. Vehicle fleets are often a major expense and source of greenhouse gas emissions. The deployment of low- or zero-emission vehicles allows businesses to cut costs and minimize the risks associated with fuel

price, maintenance downtime, and supply volatility.<sup>1</sup> These benefits also extend to our employees and drivers by reducing their commuting costs as well as their exposure to harmful tailpipe emissions. However, we need clean vehicles to be available in greater numbers and with greater predictability. Adopting the ACC Program would enable automakers to plan ahead to offer cost-competitive and attractive clean vehicle options while providing companies and investors with policy certainty to make long-term in-state investments and catalyzing the development of new technologies and associated local jobs.

In addition to the significant and far-reaching economic benefits, the public health benefits from adopting clean vehicle standards are immediate and tangible. The ACC program would put cleaner vehicles on the road—thereby improving local air quality, reducing healthcare costs,<sup>2</sup> and tackling Virginia’s top source of greenhouse gas emissions. Air pollution disproportionately impacts low-income and minority communities, where respiratory illness is correlated with higher exposure to gas- and diesel-powered vehicle pollutant emissions. A [recent nationwide study](#) found that coronavirus is more likely to be fatal for patients in areas with higher levels of air pollution than patients in cleaner parts of the country—heightening the imperative for action.

We recognize the advantages of clean vehicles for public health and the economy, and urge lawmakers to adopt the Advanced Clean Cars program to maximize cost-saving opportunities, emissions reductions, choice in the marketplace, and public health benefits that all Virginians can enjoy. We look forward to working with you during the 2021 legislative session.

Sincerely,

**Change Finance PBC**  
**DHL Express**  
**Eaton Corporation**  
**IKEA Retail U.S.**  
**JLL**  
**Lime**  
**Lyft**  
**Rivanna Natural Designs, Inc.**  
**Sustainable Design Consulting, LLC**  
**Uber**  
**Unilever**  
**Worthen Industries**

*For questions on this letter or to contact any of the signatories, please contact Brianna Esteves at [esteves@ceres.org](mailto:esteves@ceres.org).*

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<sup>1</sup> Electric vehicles in particular are estimated to save \$1,000 on fuel costs per vehicle per year and, as mechanically simpler vehicles, require less maintenance, thereby reducing vehicle down-time, increasing safety, and generating additional savings.

<sup>2</sup> A recent study from Virginia Clinicians for Climate Action found that the health impacts attributable to Virginia-specific transportation emissions are valued at \$750 million annually. The study found that Virginia could unlock significant healthcare-related savings by adopting LEV and ZEV standards. See: <https://www.virginiaclinicians.org/transportation>