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My name is Ava Cohen and I am a member of Sierra Club and The Climate Reality Project. I recently graduated college, and after studying environmental policy for four years, I feel called upon to submit a testimony about the urgent need to adopt Clean Car and Clean Truck rules in Illinois.

As a young person, I care very deeply about climate change and the world I will grow old in. Since 2019, transportation has been the dirtiest sector in the state of Illinois. Data shows that trucks, buses, and delivery vans—just 7% of vehicles on the road in Illinois—are responsible for 67% of NOx pollution, 59% of particulate matter, and 36% of greenhouse gas emissions. These emissions, as you may know, massively contribute to our warming planet, accelerating extreme weather events, rising sea levels, and increasing the frequency and intensity of natural disasters. But it's not just the climate that's at risk—these emissions are also taking a devastating toll on public health, especially in underserved marginalized communities, who often bear the brunt of these environmental justice problems.

As someone with mild asthma, I know firsthand how dangerous air pollution can be. When I come in contact with smog and pollution, it triggers my symptoms and makes it harder for me to breathe. Considering my asthma is not severe, I can only imagine how much worse it must be for those with more serious respiratory conditions, or for the elderly. Now think of the children who happen to live in heavily polluted urban areas; they are forced to breathe in toxic air every day, putting them at risk for asthma, developmental delays, and lifelong health issues they have no ability to prevent. Because of Cook County's failing grades for particulate matter air pollution, this is the reality that millions face daily—but the Illinois Pollution Control Board has the power to change that.

I strongly urge the Illinois Pollution Control Board to adopt the Advanced Clean Trucks (ACT) and Heavy-Duty Low-NOx Omnibus (HDO) rules, just as numerous other states have. Transitioning to electric vehicles for commercial fleets will not only reduce harmful emissions but also help address the disproportionate health impacts on vulnerable communities, improve air quality, and combat climate change. By requiring manufacturers of trucks, buses, and delivery vans to ensure that a certain percentage of their new sales are zero-emission vehicles by a certain date, we can begin making progress towards a Chicagoland with cleaner air, healthier people, and a sustainable future.

We cannot afford to wait any longer. The evidence is clear: we need these regulations to protect public health, reduce pollution, and ensure a healthier future for all Illinoisans. The time for action is now.

Thank you for your time and consideration.