Testimony of Jaqi Cohen, Director of Climate and Equity Policy
EPA Public Hearing for California Heavy Duty Waiver Requests
June 30, 2022

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment today. My name is Jaqi Cohen and I am the Director of Climate and Equity Policy at Tri-State Transportation Campaign. Tri-State is an advocacy organization dedicated to fighting for sustainable, equitable, and safer mobility in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut.

We’re testifying today on behalf of residents of New York and New Jersey, states that have adopted the Advance Clean Truck rule, as well as residents of Connecticut, a state that is currently working on the rule’s adoption. We’re here to urge the EPA to approve California’s waiver request in full.

In all three states that we represent, the transportation sector still remains the largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. The tri-state region continues to heavily depend on diesel trucks and buses, which have an outsized contribution on emissions despite representing a small fraction of overall vehicle fleets. Not only do the emissions from these medium- and heavy-duty vehicles contribute to climate change, but they produce dangerous air pollution that disproportionately harm our frontline communities. Halting California’s waiver request to reduce emissions from the transportation sector will cause tremendous harm to the millions of people who live near highways and other high-traffic areas in states across the country.

We are in a climate emergency, and our region is faced with the challenge of reducing greenhouse gas emissions 85% and reaching a 100% net-zero carbon emission economy by 2050. In order to do this, we need to take drastic steps towards electrifying our transportation sector. Since the devastating impact of Superstorm Sandy in 2012, Environmental Justice communities in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut have been at the frontline of the climate crisis that continues to threaten our region. Clean truck rules are life-saving regulations that must be implemented immediately to safeguard our nation’s most vulnerable communities.

Particularly in light of today’s Supreme Court ruling, it has never been more important for our federal government to allow states to protect the air quality, health, and livelihoods of their residents. Simply put- people’s lives are on the line. We’re counting on the EPA to issue these waivers and uphold President Biden’s promise to protect the American people and fight back against the climate crisis. We are counting on you to act. Thank you.