Comments of Deborah Cohn re the Transportation and Climate Initiative February 28, 2020

According to the EPA’s draft 2020 Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks (Inventory), taking into account both direct and indirect fossil fuel combustion the transportation sector emitted significantly more MMTs (million metric tons) of C02 in 2018, than the commercial, residential and industrial sectors. The Inventory shows CO2 emissions of 1,803 MMT CO2 equivalent in 2018 compared with the next highest sector, the industrial sector, which contributed 1,334 MMT CO2 equivalent. The transportation activities accounted for 35.8 percent of U.S. CO2 emissions from fossil fuel combustion in 2018 compared with 27% from the industrial end-use sector. 2018 CO2 emissions from fossil fuelcombustion (1,798 MMT CO2 equivalent) exceeded emissions from the electric power generation sector (1,753 MMT equivalent). The contributions of those two sectors dwarfed the contributions of the commercial, residential and industrial sectors. <https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/global-greenhouse-gas-emissions-data> See Figure ES-6, ES-7 and Table ES-3. In Maryland transportation is the largest source of GhG emissions.

To address the contribution of the electric power sector to GhG emissions, nine Mid-Atlantic and Northeast jurisdictions participate in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), harnessing market forces to reduce GhG emissions. This system has been highly effective, reducing CO2 emissions by 35% while decreasing electricity prices on average by 2% and allowing the regional economy to grow.

The TCI builds on the RGGI model to create a similar market-driven cap and auction system for transportation. The proposal calls for states to reduce emissions by 20-25% by 2032. The Report of the Secretary-General on the 2019 Climate Action Summit calls for CO2 emissions reductions of 45% by 2030. To ameliorate worldwide projected climate changes, the TCI should set emissions caps sufficient to achieve a 45% reduction in CO2 emissions by 2030, allowing the region to become carbon neutral by 2045 and the world by 2050.