



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
February 27, 2004

Contact: Russell Long, 415-544-0790, ext. 18
(cell) 415-302-4824
Elisa Lynch, 415-544-0790, ext 15

Ford Motors Threatens To Sue Environmental Group Over "Pinocchio" Ads

National Ad Campaign Depicts Chairman as Pinocchio for Breaking Pledge to Increase SUV Fuel Mileage

San Francisco, CA – Last week, the national environmental group Bluewater Network received a cease-and-desist letter from Ford Motor Company for its campaign attacking Ford's environmental policies. Ford is demanding that the group stop "unlawful conduct" in a print and internet campaign that depicts its chairman and chief executive as Pinocchio.

Bluewater began running ads in national publications this month including The New York Times, Mother Jones, E Magazine, and The New Republic. The ads, which are supported by nearly three dozen environmental organizations, accuse Mr. Ford of breaking a pledge he made in 2000 to increase the fuel mileage of Ford's popular lineup of sport utility vehicles by 25 percent by 2005. They feature a drawing of Mr. Ford with an extra-long nose, and the words: "Bill Ford Jr. or Pinocchio? Don't Buy His Environmental Rhetoric. Don't Buy His Cars."

Russell Long, director of Bluewater Network, and the author of California's landmark law to reduce vehicle greenhouse gas emissions stated, "The day Mr. Ford broke his pledge to increase fuel mileage was tragic for the environment, but trying to stifle the free speech rights of our citizens isn't going to solve anything. When he took the reins of Ford Motor Company, Mr. Ford promised to preserve and protect the environment, but his average vehicle isn't any better now than it was then. For the past three years, he's also ignored our requests to meet personally to discuss ways to turn this around. Frankly, he's been a big disappointment."

Bill Ford also personally lobbied Congress against raising national fuel mileage standards, promising instead to deliver fuel efficiency without federal regulations.

Bluewater has also led a campaign resulting in over ten thousand phone calls and letters being sent to Ford Motor Company complaining about the company's policies.

In a letter sent by the law firm of Kirkland & Ellis in Washington, Ford contends that "[Y]our personal attacks on Mr. Ford are gratuitous and offensive, well beyond the scope of responsible civil public dialogue, and strong evidence that you made the misrepresentations with malice."

Despite Ford Motor's return to profitability in 2003, the environmental group notes that Ford has so far failed to reinstate their pledge to increase SUV fuel mileage by 25 percent, or offer alternatives for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the Ford fleet. Light-duty vehicles such as SUVs, minivans, and pickup trucks are reportedly one of the largest sources of global warming emissions in the US.

Within days of Ford making its July 27, 2000 pledge, General Motors and DaimlerChrysler made identical pledges, creating the appearance of an environmental race between the Big Three that helped to undermine a Senate measure that would have nearly doubled the fuel economy of light-duty trucks, from 20.7 mpg to 36 mpg by 2015. When Ford withdrew its pledge last year, the other manufacturers also withdrew their

commitments. Subsequently, The National Highway and Safety Transportation Board established a very modest 1.5 mile per gallon fuel mileage increases for light-duty trucks by 2007.

In response to Bluewater's criticism, Ford officials have pointed to the upcoming debut of a new fuel efficient SUV, the Ford Escape hybrid, as proof of their commitment towards protecting the environment. "Mr. Ford can't escape his broken commitment, despite the name of the new car. Unfortunately, the only real escape from global warming is for Ford's overall emissions to drop, and that means asking Congress to double the nation's fuel mileage standards."

Last June at Ford's centennial, Bluewater Network agreed to hold negotiations with Ford officials in return for temporarily withholding their ad campaign. Negotiations broke down on January 1, 2004.

The Bluewater Network ad can be viewed at www.bluewaternetwork.org

###