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From the Introduction

The moral aspect of environmental sustainability has yet to be adequately addressed with regard to the passenger car sector. Almost all aspects of this industry involve decisions in which trade-offs are made between needs and wants. I maintain that we all, as human beings, have a binding and inter-generational moral duty to ensure the availability of those natural resources necessary for human existence.

This, however, is not as clear cut as it seems. Since the rise of modernity in Western society, and most recently in the post- modern era, we have been confronted with a discussion which questions the quintessence of central authority. This is compounded by modern technologies which allow for the formation of groups which often threaten or supersede any central authority. This higher order of complexity has significant implications for the application of a universal moral law with respect to future generations.

I argue this in four steps. Via an analysis of Kant's case for the Categorical Imperative as an objective basis for universal and binding moral decision-making, I show that if Kant's argument holds for an individual, it must necessarily be binding for all human beings, regardless of their place in time, a *sui generis* duty.

Second, I rely on selected primary sources and data to show that we are experiencing an environmental crisis, focusing on the aspect of climate change due to green house gas (GHG) emissions in the form of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from passenger cars. I show that this threat is self-induced and controllable through concerted human activity to abate climate change concentrating on two aspects related to the U.S. passenger car industry - the contribution to CO₂ emissions and emissions flattening.

Third, I argue that this industrial sector (oil industry, automobile manufacturers, government, and consumers) is a system in which central authority is increasingly ineffective by presenting a historical analysis of the interrelationships within the sector, between the participant groups. I will show that these relationships are dependent on the motivational and situational forces in which each group finds itself and that these have

changed over time. I will also show that if there is one common motivation shared by these groups, it is economic in nature and is measured by the costs and benefits which each of the groups believe to accrue to them, based on their evaluation of their situation.

Finally, I present a brief discussion of the post modern condition, which is characterized by a lack of central authority. I maintain that there is both promise and peril in this present situation, as higher-level behavior is almost impossible to predict in advance. I will suggest measures for technical solutions as well as short- and mid-term policies which may lead to longer term results and possibilities for us to protect the environment for future generations.

I do not have a concrete answer, but hope, through this discussion to raise awareness of the complex and interrelated issues involved and to generate a new understanding of the problem in an attempt to contribute to the effort to save our planet for future generations.