

# Bloomberg

**“Make no mistake. This is a demand to weaken the standards, disguised as a polite procedural request,” said Dan Becker, director of the Safe Climate Campaign.**

## Automakers ask EPA chief to toss Obama emissions decision

By Ryan Beene Bloomberg News February 23, 2017

WASHINGTON — Automakers have asked the US Environmental Protection Agency’s new chief to withdraw a decision made in the Obama administration’s final days that upheld light-vehicle greenhouse gas emissions standards through 2025.

In separate Feb. 21 letters, the Association of Global Automakers and the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers asked EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt to withdraw the agency’s Jan. 13 determination that greenhouse gas emissions standards through 2025 should remain unchanged from when they took effect in 2012.

Global Automakers chief executive John Bozzella wrote that the EPA’s move to finalize its standards in January violated a “central tenet” of the pact because it came more than a year before the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration was expected to complete its fuel economy standards.

“Politics is not a reason for running roughshod over important procedural protections found in the Clean Air Act,” Bozzella wrote in the group’s letter. The group represents the US operations of 12 automakers based overseas, including Toyota and Honda.

The letters mark an escalation in the auto industry’s campaign to shape efficiency regulations that they say are overly demanding amid cheap gasoline and tepid demand for the most fuel-efficient vehicles, and could jeopardize industry jobs. They may also find a friendly response from Pruitt, who focused his political career on attacking Obama administration efforts to regulate greenhouse gas emissions.

**“Make no mistake. This is a demand to weaken the standards, disguised as a polite procedural request,” said Dan Becker, director of the Safe Climate Campaign.**

The Washington-based trade groups also asked Pruitt to resume a review of the standards in conjunction with NHTSA, which is developing vehicle fuel economy regulations for 2022-2025.

The EPA's decision followed a review that began last year to determine whether the rules from 2022-2025 were feasible. Automakers say it was unfairly cut short by the Obama administration.

In the Alliance's letter, CEO Mitch Bainwol said the EPA's decision was "riddled with indefensible assumptions, inadequate analysis and a failure to engage with contrary evidence." The Alliance represents Ford, General Motors, Volkswagen, and nine other carmakers.

EPA spokeswoman Julia Valentine said the agency would review the letter, declining to comment further.

In 2011, automakers agreed to the 2025 efficiency rules in a landmark deal brokered by the Obama administration to boost fuel economy to a fleet average of more than 50 miles per gallon by 2025. The agreement aligned tailpipe greenhouse gas limits set by the EPA and California's Air Resources Board with fuel economy regulations governed by the NHTSA.

In a statement, Sierra Club associate director for federal advocacy Andrew Linhardt criticized the letters as a "shift in the wrong direction."

"The Environmental Protection Agency's technical review of the current fuel economy standards shows that the standards are not only well within reach, but are already working," Linhardt said.

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/business/2017/02/22/automakers-ask-epa-chief-toss-obama-emissions-decision/7eaY7LrfZm9xjt97fKagzL/story.html>