

Roll Back? Fight Back!

It was the ‘biggest single step’ against global warming. Trump gutted it.

By Dan Becker and James Gerstenzang

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President Trump’s rollback of clean-car rules halts the biggest single step any nation has taken to cut global warming pollution. The rules took effect in 2012 and would deliver a new-car fleet in 2025 that averages 37 mpg, while cutting auto emissions in half. By trashing the rules, the president is leaving the world at far greater risk of the climate catastrophes we are already witnessing.

Before Trump gutted them, the rules not only reduced pollution — they were saving Americans hundreds of billions of dollars at the pump. Even after paying for the gasoline-saving improvements — more-efficient transmissions and safe, lightweight materials — consumers would come out \$4,000 to \$6,000 ahead because their cars would need less fuel.

Each gallon of gasoline we burn pumps 25 pounds of carbon dioxide (CO₂), the primary global warming pollutant, into the atmosphere. The stringent standards were designed to prevent release of 6 billion tons of CO₂ by eliminating our need for 12 billion barrels of oil.

CO₂ creates an invisible heat-trapping blanket close to Earth. The energy from that heat is making tropical storms and wildfires more frequent and fierce. The heat is helping spread tropical diseases to once-temperate climates and is making increasing swaths of the globe unfit for human habitation.

Ignoring science, Trump is ending widely popular rules that would improve the cars we drive for years to come and keep as much CO₂ out of the atmosphere as shutting all U.S. coal-fired power plants for more than a year.

By adopting these responsible rules, the United States had signaled it was committed to tackling the planet's biggest environmental threat — rather than burying its head in the warming sand.

Trying to justify the rollback, the Trump administration falsely claimed that stronger rules would make us less safe on the road. As we wrote in *The New York Times*:

“This is auto mechanics, not rocket science. Ford proved that efficiency and safety go hand in hand when it converted the steel bodies of its F-150 pickups to aluminum. It lopped 700 pounds from America’s best-selling model and helped lift mileage by 4 mpg. The [government] upgraded the truck to a five star safety rating.”

Yet while touting “safety,” the administration ignored deadly air pollution from refineries needed to keep more gas guzzlers on the road. This will kill an estimated 18,000 people.

To justify its attack, the Trump administration has fabricated a false conflict between safe cars and a safe climate. Americans can and must have both.

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