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Carper urges EPA to set tough nationwide emission standards

[Sean Reilly](#), E&E News reporter

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An accelerating push to eventually end the sale of new gasoline- and diesel-powered vehicles has gotten a noteworthy boost from Senate Environment and Public Works Chair Tom Carper (D-Del.).

In a [letter](#) released today, Carper urged EPA Administrator Michael Regan to adopt phased standards that would lead to zero-emission vehicles capturing half the market for new cars and light-duty trucks by 2030 and then fully occupying it by 2035.

"National and subnational jurisdictions around the world are beginning to announce policies to eliminate sales of emitting vehicles," Carper told Regan, singling out China by name. "Yet other countries are better preparing for this reality than the United States currently is."

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Carper's letter, dated last Thursday, came days after EPA signaled plans to again allow California to set greenhouse gas emission limits stricter than those of the federal government. Under former President Trump, EPA had stripped the state of that latitude two years ago in the course of a broader rollback of Obama administration vehicle standards.

In returning to stricter rules, Regan and other agency regulators must decide how aggressively to recalibrate.

In his letter, Carper pressed them to adopt industrywide targets based on the voluntary goals previously set by California and some automakers through model year 2026 and then move to an emission standard for cars and light trucks in model year 2027 "that reflects the increasing availability of zero emission vehicles."

"Consistent with the ambition we are seeing from automakers, EPA should set standards in a manner that will result in 50 percent of new vehicles being zero emission vehicles by 2030 and all new vehicles being zero emission vehicles by 2035," Carper wrote.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom (D) has already ordered a ban in his state on the sale of new gas-powered cars and light trucks by 2035. Last month, he was among a dozen governors to call for a national policy along the same lines.

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