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'No turning back:' Biden signs order targeting half of all vehicles sold in US to be zero-emissions by 2030

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WASHINGTON – President Joe Biden said "there's no turning back" on the future of an electric auto industry Thursday as he signed an executive order setting a target for zero-emissions vehicles to account for half of all automobiles sold in the USA by 2030.

The nonbinding goal hinges on major investments by the federal government in charging stations and other infrastructure.

It's part a series of actions Biden announced aimed at jump-starting a dramatic shift toward electric vehicles as part of the administration's broader agenda to tackle climate change and compete with China, a leader in the electric vehicle market.

The president, zero-emissions vehicles staged behind him on the White House South Lawn, was joined by executives from Ford, GM and Stellantis, as well as leaders from the United Auto Workers union and members of Congress.

"The question is whether we'll lead or fall behind in the race for the future," he said before signing the order. "Right now, China's leading the race as one of the largest and fastest growing electric vehicle markets in the world."

Biden said his administration will develop long-term fuel efficiency and emissions standards that would apply to heavy-duty vehicles in addition to cars, SUVs and pickups. The Environmental Protection Agency announced it will unwind President Donald Trump's rollback of near-term fuel efficiency and emissions standards for gas vehicles.

The White House estimated the new EPA rules would save about 200 billion gallons of gasoline and reduce 2 billion metric tons of carbon pollution, resulting in \$900 in savings for consumers over a vehicle's lifespan. Administration officials who requested anonymity to discuss the measures said the fuel efficiency and emissions standards would result in about \$140 billion in net benefits over the life of the program.

The executive order applies to battery electric, plug-in hybrid electric and fuel-cell electric vehicles. [According to the Pew Research Center](#), electric vehicles accounted for less than 2% of U.S. automobile sales in each of the past three years, putting the USA behind 19 other nations and the world's overall share. China has more than double the amount of electric vehicles on the road and is growing electric vehicle sales at more than twice the rate compared with the USA, according to Pew.

"The rest of the world is moving ahead. We just got to step up," said Biden, who test drove an electric Jeep Wrangler Rubicon 4xE at the White House after his remarks.

Biden has made electric vehicles a major priority in his \$1.2 trillion bipartisan infrastructure bill that the Senate is taking up this week. The proposal includes \$7.5 billion in electrical vehicle charging stations and another \$7.5 billion for electric buses. It would allocate \$6 billion in battery supply chain and battery-pack manufacturing and in helping factories expand capacity to produce electric vehicles.

Biden said his order is intended to "set into motion an all-out effort" to shift to electric vehicles, adding that auto companies need help from the federal government through his infrastructure proposals to reach zero-emissions goals.

"That's a big deal, but to unlock the full potential, we have to keep investing in our workers and our manufacturing capacity," he said.

Separate from the White House announcement, auto companies unveiled their own goals to achieve sales of 40%-50% of annual U.S. volumes in electric vehicles for 2030. BMW, Volkswagen, Honda and Volvo said they supported the move to expand U.S. electric vehicle manufacturing.

Tesla, the U.S. leader in electric vehicle sales led by CEO Elon Musk, was not among the auto companies represented at the White House. Musk wrote on Twitter that [it "seems odd"](#) Tesla wasn't invited.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said the companies that were invited are the three largest employers of Union Auto Workers members. Tesla workers are not part of a union.

“I’ll let you draw your own conclusion,” Psaki said.

United Auto Workers expressed support for Biden's initiative but said the organization's "focus is not on hard deadlines or percentages, but on preserving the wages and benefits that have been the heart and soul of the American middle class."

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The president has set a goal of reducing net greenhouse gas emissions by 50%-52% below 2005 levels by 2030. Officials estimate the latest announcements put the USA on track to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from new passenger vehicle sales by more than 60% in 2030 compared with vehicles sold last year.

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2021/08/05/president-joe-bide-zero-emissions-vehicles-2030-goal/5489643001/>