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Biden Targets 50 Percent EVs by 2030

Automakers are voicing support of the goal, but environmental groups are asking for the "aspiration" to be backed by tough regulations.

By Jim Motavalli
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- **President Biden signed an executive order targeting sales of electric vehicles to hit 50% by 2030.**
- **He was joined by representatives from Ford, GM, Stellantis, and the UAW for the announcement.**
- **Environmental leaders applaud the goal, but fear it doesn’t stand a chance without the backing of tough regulations.**

On August 5, representatives of Ford, General Motors, Stellantis, and the United Auto Workers stood with President Biden to [voluntarily support](#) an executive order targeting a 50% sales share for electric vehicles in 2030. The goal includes plug-in hybrid and hydrogen fuel-cell cars in the mix. The administration also released emissions standards through 2026 that are much stronger than those imposed by Trump, but loopholes could weaken them.

The Big Three [announced](#) “their shared aspiration to achieve sales of 40% to 50% of annual US volumes of electric vehicles (battery electric, fuel cell, and plug-in hybrid vehicles) by 2030 in order to move the nation closer to a zero-emissions future consistent with Paris climate goals. Our recent product, technology, and investment announcements highlight our collective commitment to be leaders in the U.S. transition to electric vehicles.”

A group that includes BMW, Honda, Volkswagen, and Volvo said that they partnered with California when President Trump set out to roll back federal emissions standards, and that they

now “applaud President Biden’s leadership on reducing emissions and investing in critical infrastructure to achieve these reductions.”

Environmental leaders are supportive of the 50% goal, but want it backed up with tough regulations. Joel Levin, executive director of Plug In America, told *Autoweek*, “I would say we’re excited that the President is making a strong commitment on EVs to get to 50% by 2030, but there needs to be some teeth to it. It can’t just be based on voluntary efforts.”

Their wariness is somewhat understandable, given that some automakers, including General Motors, what is now Stellantis, Hyundai/Kia, Mazda, Nissan, and Toyota climbed on board with Trump’s approach, which included withdrawing California’s ability to create fuel economy standards separate from the federal government. This happened despite some of these same automakers supporting the tough Obama standards in 2012. The Big Three announcement is a “shared aspiration,” not a firm commitment.

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The EPA announced late Thursday that the proposed new standards would reach an industry-wide target of 171 grams of carbon dioxide (CO₂) per mile by model year 2026. That’s the equivalent of 52 miles per gallon. The standards will get 10 percent tougher in model year 2023 compared to 2022, and five percent stronger each year from model year 2024 through 2026. The agency said the proposed rules would result in 2.2 billion tons of avoided CO₂ through 2050.

Funding for EV charging is also in flux. The Biden Administration proposed \$15 billion as part of the infrastructure bill, but that was [reduced to \\$7.5 billion](#) in negotiations. Joe Britton, executive director of the Zero Emission Transportation Association, said that at least \$20 to \$30 billion will be needed over the next decade to build out a robust national charging network.

The Alliance for Automotive Innovation says it represents automakers producing nearly 99% of the cars and trucks sold in the US. President and CEO John Bozzella said in a statement, “Auto manufacturers are committed to a net-zero carbon transportation future, and we look forward to working with the administration as we evaluate EPA’s proposed changes to light-duty vehicle standards for model years 2023 to 2026.” Bozzella said the industry has committed to investing more than \$330 billion “to bring exciting new electric vehicles to market.”

When it comes to the sales targets, many automakers have already announced plans that fit into at least a 40% EV mix by 2030. Honda says it expects a 40% mix of battery EVs and hydrogen cars by that date in North America, and Volkswagen expects 50% for the US (and China). Stellantis projected that 40% of its American sales will be either battery electric or plug-in hybrid within four years. General Motors aims to phase out internal combustion by 2035, and

Cadillac will be all-electric by 2030. Mercedes-Benz said it will be “dominantly” electric by the end of the decade.

Jessica Caldwell, Edmunds’ executive director of Insights, pointed out that these sales targets “are certainly not unreasonable, and most likely achievable by 2030 given that automakers have already baked in large numbers of electric vehicles into their product cycles.” Auto industry leaders “have seen the writing on the wall for some time now when it comes to electrification and autonomous technologies,” she said.

Edmunds data estimates that battery electrics were 2.2% of all U.S. vehicle sales in the first six months of this year, which is up from 1.4% in the first half of 2020.

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