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But GM's flip-flop on California has Becker dubious about the automaker's desire to follow through. In 2011, the company committed "not to contest" California's waiver that allows the state to set its own fuel economy and emissions rules. Former GM CEO Dan Akerson said so in a signed letter to the U.S. Department of Transportation. GM later joined Trump's lawsuit to eliminate the waiver. Then, with Joe Biden in office in 2021, GM withdrew from the litigation.

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GM's EV commitment still has its skeptics

They cite GM's history of flip flopping on tougher fuel economy rules.

By David Welch
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In a surprise move, [General Motors](#) joined forces with the [Environmental Defense Fund](#) (EDF) to recommend tougher emissions rules for passenger vehicles. But skeptics remain unconvinced by the company's professed commitment to going green, citing GM's history of battling tougher fuel economy rules.

GM and the EDF are recommending that the [Environmental Protection Agency](#) (EPA) establish standards ensuring at least 50 percent of new vehicles sold by 2030 are zero-emitting while

achieving a 60 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, a roadmap that matches up nicely with GM's plan to make all of its own models electric by 2035.

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Kristen Siemen, GM's chief sustainability officer, says the electric push is real: The EVs are coming, and GM wants government rules that give all automakers a clear path to get there. The company's Chevy Bolt EV has been on the market for six years, and GM has already spent a chunk of its \$35 billion budget to bring 30 electric vehicles to market by 2025. "We're committed," Siemen says. "The plans are very much aligned with our product plan."

While GM's biggest push to reduce greenhouse gas emissions comes from its electrification plan, Siemen says the automaker will also improve fuel economy for its internal-combustion vehicles. Government data show that the fuel economy of GM's pickups and large SUVs has been stable since 2018, but it hasn't improved much for the largest engines.

GM isn't alone in its balancing act — legacy carmakers are in a pickle. On one hand, they need to push into electrification to meet future regulations and because, as Tesla has proven, EVs are growing in popularity. But to fund that conversion, they have to build roomy gasoline-fueled vehicles that often get the poorest fuel economy.

For now, automakers are mostly selling electric luxury vehicles with price tags of \$42,000 and above. GM has the Bolt EV for less than \$30,000 and will build a bigger, roomier Chevrolet Equinox starting at \$30,000 next year.

"Going forward, if you look at our EV portfolio, it covers every price point and every segment," Siemen says.

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The Union of Concerned Scientists takes a similar view. "GM, like many other automakers, has been an opponent of strong standards in the past, so we'll be watching closely to see the substance of their promises," Dan Anair, director of the Clean Transportation Program at UCS,

said in an email. "EPA needs to quickly move ahead with the next round of standards so we can cut emissions in the years to come. Strong standards are the one thing that will ensure GM and all automakers make the emission reductions that are needed."

GM proposed just that. Now the company needs to deliver.