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## **General Motors to Pay Nearly \$146 Million for Excess Car Emissions**

The automaker will also retire millions of credits that it has received for complying with federal emissions rules, the Biden administration announced Wednesday.

By Maxine Joselow

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General Motors will pay a penalty of nearly \$146 million and take other steps to resolve excess emissions from nearly 6 million vehicles on the nation's roads, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Transportation Department announced Wednesday.

The move marks a significant step to ensure compliance with President Biden's most consequential climate rule: carbon dioxide emissions limits for cars. It comes

after an EPA investigation found that these vehicles were emitting more than 10 percent higher CO<sub>2</sub> on average than the automaker's initial compliance reports claimed.

"EPA's vehicle standards depend on strong oversight in order to deliver public health benefits in the real world," EPA Administrator Michael Regan said in a statement. "Our investigation has achieved accountability and upholds an important program that's reducing air pollution and protecting communities across the country."

GM spokesman Bill Grotz said in an email that the automaker is not admitting any wrongdoing, including any violation of the Clean Air Act or other relevant federal laws.

"We believe this is the best course of action to swiftly resolve outstanding issues with the federal government regarding this matter," Grotz said. "GM remains committed to reducing auto emissions and working toward achieving the Administration's fleet electrification goals."

The vehicles in question are model years 2012 through 2018. They include popular SUVs under GM's Chevrolet brand, including the Chevrolet Equinox with front-wheel drive.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), a division of the Transportation Department, will impose the \$145.8 million penalty. In addition, GM has agreed to retire millions of credits that it has received for complying with federal rules.

The automaker will cancel 50 million metric tons of greenhouse gas credits from the EPA, the agency said in a news release, as well as roughly 30.6 million gas mileage credits from NHTSA, spokeswoman Lucia Sanchez said in an email.

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The action announced Wednesday pales in comparison to the Volkswagen emissions cheating scandal, often known as “Dieselgate.” In 2015, VW admitted to equipping around 11 million cars worldwide with software designed to cheat emissions tests. The German automaker later agreed to pay total fines of roughly \$20 billion.

“Obviously this is not as large as Dieselgate,” said Dave Cooke, senior vehicles analyst at the Union of Concerned Scientists. “But 6 million vehicles is no small number.”

The Biden administration has sought to step up enforcement of the nation’s bedrock environmental laws. Last year, the Justice Department and the state of California reached an agreement with the truck engine manufacturer Cummins to resolve claims that the company installed devices to defeat emissions controls on hundreds of thousands of engines. The \$1.6 billion penalty was the largest ever under the Clean Air Act.

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