



EPA allows California to ban gas-powered new car sales by 2035

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A plan to phase out gas-powered vehicle sales was approved in 2022.

By Matthew Glasser and MaryAlice Parks
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California has been given the green light by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to ban the sale of new gas-powered cars and light trucks by 2035.

In 2022, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) approved a controversial plan, dubbed the Advanced Clean Cars II Regulations (ACC II), to begin phasing out sales of new gas-powered cars and light trucks in the state. The agency established a year-to-year roadmap with specific requirements for how many zero-emission vehicles automakers must deliver to the state.

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In 2026, 35% of new cars and light trucks sold in California would need to be zero-emission, according to ACC II, followed by 68% in 2030. By 2035, only zero-emission cars and light trucks could be sold as new in California, though plug-in hybrids and gas-powered used vehicles could continue to be sold.

On Wednesday, citing the Clean Air Act, the EPA granted two waivers that California needed to move forward with its plan.

"California has longstanding authority to request waivers from EPA to protect its residents from dangerous air pollution coming from mobile sources like cars and trucks," EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan said in a [statement](#) announcing the agency action. "Today's actions follow through on EPA's commitment to partner with states to reduce emissions and act on the threat of climate change."

In addition to the phase-out of gas-powered new car and light truck sales, the EPA approved California's plan to reduce [nitrogen oxide \(NOx\) emissions](#), a primary ingredient of smog, from heavy-duty vehicles. The state will initially require a 75% reduction in NOx pollution followed by a 90% decrease a few years later.

"Clean cars are here to stay," California Gov. Gavin Newsom said in part Wednesday in a [statement](#) reacting to the EPA action. "The Biden-Harris Administration reaffirmed what we've known for decades – California can rise to the challenge of protecting our people by cleaning our air and cutting pollution."

"This was an expected development. And we expect President Trump will revoke the waiver in 2025," John Bozzella, president and CEO of the auto industry trade association Alliance for Automotive Innovation, said in a [statement](#) responding to the EPA announcement. "We've said the country should have a single, national standard to reduce carbon in transportation, but the question about the general authority of California to establish a vehicle emissions program – and for other states to follow that program – is ultimately something for policymakers and the courts to sort out."

Climate activists have been pressuring the EPA to secure these approvals before President-elect Trump takes office. While his incoming administration appears likely to fight it, based on past statements Trump has made, the EPA's approval will clear the way for California's new law to take effect and arguably make it more difficult for the incoming administration to rescind.

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The week of the recent presidential election, Evergreen Action, a leading climate advocacy organization, listed the EPA waiver in a [memo](#) as one of the top moves the Biden administration could take to "preserve climate progress" under a Trump administration.

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During his first administration, Trump's EPA fought California over moves to set its own vehicle emission standards. On the campaign trail this year, he often mocked support for electric vehicles and vowed to scrap government support for them.

"The American people re-elected President Trump by a resounding margin giving him a mandate to implement the promises he made on the campaign trail, including stopping attacks on gas-powered cars," a spokesperson for the Trump-Vance transition team said in an email response to an ABC News request for comment on the EPA action. "When he takes office, President Trump will support the auto industry, allowing space for both gas-powered cars AND electric vehicles."

<https://abcnews.go.com/US/epa-allows-california-ban-gas-powered-new-car/story?id=116910026>