



EPA approves CA’s ban on sale of new gas vehicles by 2035. Can Trump revoke the decision?

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Becker with Center for Biological Diversity says—while the federal Clean Air Act allows for California to seek waivers from the federal government to set stricter standards, “it doesn’t have any provision at all that says once the waiver is granted, that it can be revoked by a President who doesn’t like California, and so President Trump would lack the authority to revoke the waiver...He may try. We will sue him, along with other environmentalists, and we will win.”

And the EPA’s decision affects more than just California. Under the Clean Air Act, 11 other states and Washington D.C. are allowed to follow California’s newly approved stricter regulations, both Thompson and Becker said.

A decision by the EPA this week means California is on track for all new car sales to be zero-emission vehicles by 2035. President-elect Trump wants to overturn it.

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SACRAMENTO, Calif. — A new decision by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency this week means California is on track for all new-car sales to be zero-emission vehicles by 2035.

The EPA granted the California Air Resources Board waivers to move forward with two new regulations, both of which are stricter than current federal rules.

ABC10 spoke with people praising the decision—and those who say they'll fight to overturn it.

One “will require manufacturers to comply with more stringent emissions standards,” according to CARB.

The other “requires an increasing number of clean vehicles be delivered for sale each year. By 2035, all those vehicles must be zero-emission, which includes the option to sell plug-in hybrid vehicles.”

CARB points out, “the regulation does not ban fossil fueled cars and pickup trucks; residents can drive existing internal combustion vehicles as long as they want.”

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How are these waivers for stricter standards possible?

“Under the Clean Air Act,” the EPA says, “California is afforded the ability to adopt emissions requirements independent from EPA’s regulations to meet its significant air quality challenges. The state must seek a waiver from EPA for new motor vehicle emission standards.”

The EPA says its review found “that opponents of the waivers did not meet their burden to show how either program is inconsistent with the Clean Air Act.”

California Democrats and environmental groups are praising the move as good for people’s health - and wallets, since they won’t have to pay for gas with electric vehicles.

“With more makes and models available than ever before, millions of Californians have already made the switch to clean cars,” Gov. Gavin Newsom said in a statement Wednesday. “Automakers and manufacturers have made it clear they intend to stick with California and consumers as we move toward clean cars that save people money.”

Others oppose the waivers, saying they reduce consumer choice and will force Californians to buy more expensive vehicles.

“There are families all across the state of California that are likely to be priced out of the new car market,” said Chet Thompson, president and CEO of American Fuel and Petrochemical Manufacturers.

The changes, he said, amount to an eventual ban on the internal combustion engine.

“My commentary is not anti-electric vehicles; it's anti-bans. Bans never work. They're very un-American,” Thompson said.

In a post on X, California Republican Congressman Kevin Kiley, “Biden gave Newsom the official green light to ban all gas cars in California. All this does is prove how irrelevant the governor has become. We will promptly reverse Newsom's insane mandate in the new year.”

But can Republicans – specifically, Donald Trump once he is President again – do that?

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“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,” said EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan. “[Wednesday’s] actions follow through on EPA’s commitment to partner with states to reduce emissions and act on the threat of climate change.”

Thompson, on the other hand, says the U.S. Supreme Court is on track to hear a case that could decide the fate of these waivers.

“I'm pretty confident that what the courts are going to find is that neither EPA nor California has the authority that they're asserting,” he said.

California’s regulations have a long road ahead.

And the EPA’s decision affects more than just California. Under the Clean Air Act, 11 other states and Washington D.C. are allowed to follow California’s newly approved stricter regulations, both Thompson and Becker said.

They pointed out that represents a major slice of America’s car-driving public: somewhere between 30 and 40 percent live in states now given the green light by the EPA to phase out the sale of gas-powered cars by 2035.

Will this likely face legal action? Absolutely. On the executive level, President Trump has promised to try to un-do these changes. We will likely see this battled out in the courts as well.

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