



EPA approves California plan to ditch gas-powered cars by 2035

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Andrew Freedman
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The EPA gave the green light Wednesday to [California's plan to ditch gas-powered cars](#) under the Clean Air Act starting in 2035.

Why it matters: The incoming Trump administration is likely to overturn the waiver to California. But in issuing it, the EPA will make it harder to accomplish a reversal.

The move is also significant because California is the nation's largest auto market and about a dozen other states tend to adopt the state's emissions standards.

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Zoom in: In addition to [California's request for a waiver](#) under the Clean Air Act to implement its clean car regulations (known as the Advanced Clean Cars II regulation), the is also receiving one for its heavy-duty highway and off-road vehicles to cut their smog-forming emissions.

California has long been granted the ability to apply for waivers because of significant air quality challenges. During the first Trump administration, the [EPA moved to revoke such authority](#).

"California has long-standing 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 Regan said in a statement.

"Today's actions follow through on EPA's commitment to partner with states to reduce emissions and act on the threat of climate change."

The intrigue: The two new waivers seek to address both planet-warming greenhouse gas emissions and contributors to hazardous air pollution, including fine particulate matter that can harm human health.

The Clean Cars regulation was adopted in 2022 and applies to cars beginning with the 2026 model year.

Starting in 2026, 35% of new cars for sale in the state would need to be zero-emission, which could include plug-in hybrids, battery electric and hydrogen-powered vehicles.

The percentage would increase to 100% by 2035, though gas-powered cars already on the road would be permitted to continue driving.

"With more makes and models available than ever before, millions of Californians have already made the switch to clean cars," California Gov. Gavin Newsom said in a statement.

Yes, but: The Newsom administration doesn't describe the regulations as a ban on gas-powered cars. It emphasizes that it targets new cars only, and includes plug-in hybrids.

<https://www.axios.com/2024/12/18/epa-california-electric-vehicles-waiver>