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'Latest Betrayal of Democracy': Trump Signs Order Blocking CA Effort to Ban New Gas-Powered Cars

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By Eloise Goldsmith
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U.S. President Donald Trump on Thursday signed multiple Congressional Review Act resolutions that target California's efforts to adopt electric vehicles statewide and phase out gas-powered cars, in a move that one climate campaigner called "Trump's latest betrayal of democracy."

Trump reversed a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency waiver granted to California during the waning days of the Biden administration that allowed the state

to enforce tougher vehicle pollution standards. That decision allowed California to require that gasoline-powered cars be phased out, and implement a ban on the sale of new gasoline-powered cars completely in 2035.

The other resolutions signed by Trump revoked waivers for a policy that required half of all new trucks sold in California be electric by 2035, and overturned a policy that placed limits on "allowable emissions of nitrogen oxide from cars and trucks," according to *The New York Times*.

Congress, which is Republican-controlled, passed a measure in May that paved the way for Thursday's signing. At the time, the Senate parliamentarian, the unelected arbiter of the chamber's procedures, said that the EPA waivers did not qualify as federal rules for the purpose of the Congressional Review Act (CRA). The Government Accountability Office has also said they aren't subject to the law.

The CRA gives lawmakers a limited window to overturn federal rules, and resolutions brought under the law are not subject to the Senate filibuster.

Green groups sharply condemned Trump's signing of the resolutions.

"Signing this bill is a flagrant abuse of the law to reward Big Oil and Big Auto corporations at the expense of everyday people's health and their wallets," said Dan Becker, director of the Center for Biological Diversity's Safe Climate Transport Campaign, on Thursday.

Simon Mui, managing director for transportation at the Natural Resources Defense Council, said Thursday that "California's vehicle standards reduce costs for drivers, increase customer choice, boost domestic manufacturing, improve air quality, and help address the climate crisis."

"There is no reason politicians in Washington should be stepping in at this late date to try and undercut states' protections for their residents," Mui continued. "The oil industry may be celebrating today, but the rest of us are going to continue to keep fighting for cleaner air, lower energy bills, and a safer climate."

Katherine García, director of the Sierra Club's Clean Transportation for All campaign, said on Thursday that "instead of investing in electric vehicle manufacturing here in the U.S. and leading us towards a healthier future, the administration is dead set on pushing us backwards and ceding EV innovation and leadership to China."

Shortly after Trump signed the resolutions, California officials announced they had filed a lawsuit over the move. A statement from Democratic California Gov. Gavin Newsom's office called the resolutions "illegal."

"The president's reckless, politically motivated, and illegal attacks on California continue, this time with his attempt to trample on our longstanding authority to maintain more stringent clean vehicle standards," said California Attorney General Bonta in a statement Thursday announcing the legal challenge. "The president is busy playing partisan games with lives on the line and yanking away good jobs that would bolster the economy—ignoring that these actions have life or death consequences for California communities breathing dirty, toxic air."

California also recently filed a legal challenge over Trump's decision to order the deployment of National Guard members and Marine troops to Los Angeles in response to protests that sprang up in response to federal immigration raids.

<https://www.commondreams.org/news/electric-vehicles-california-trump>