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With weaker rules, car companies will “make more gas guzzlers that guzzle oil and produce a lot of pollution and cost consumers more at the gas pump,” Becker said.

Trump signed a separate law in June to block California from enforcing a ban on new gas-powered car sales in 2035. Congress and the administration have also ended federal tax credits for EVs and pulled funding for building EVs and batteries.

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Trump announces plans to weaken fuel efficiency rules for cars and trucks

Executives from Ford, GM and Stellantis joined the president as he announced plans to roll back rules pushing automakers to sell more electric cars.

By Nicolás Rivero and Dan Diamond
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President Donald Trump announced the rollback of fuel efficiency and tailpipe emission rules for cars and trucks at a White House event attended by executives from the country's biggest automakers Wednesday.

Under rules set by President Joe Biden, new cars sold in the United States would need to get more than 50 miles per gallon on average in 2031, effectively requiring automakers to sell more electric vehicles to meet the standard. The proposed rule change would lower that figure to 34.5 miles per gallon. Last year, new vehicles got about 28 miles per gallon on average, according to federal estimates.

Trump also said his administration will “cancel” Environmental Protection Agency rules that limited greenhouse gas pollution from vehicles’ tailpipes. Turning to Ford CEO Jim Farley, Trump added, “Your people at Ford were coming to me all the time” to lobby for weaker rules.

“These rules are going to allow the automakers to make vehicles that Americans want to purchase, not vehicles that Joe Biden and [former transportation secretary Pete] Buttigieg want them to build,” Transportation Secretary Sean P. Duffy said. Lawmakers and executives from General Motors, Ford and Stellantis were at the White House to mark the announcement. Trump called on them one by one to praise his decision.

“Today is a victory for common sense and affordability,” Farley said while standing over Trump’s shoulder, adding, “We believe that people should be able to make a choice, as you said, Mr. President, and we will invest more in affordable vehicles.”

Trump’s signature second-term legislation, the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, eliminated financial penalties for car companies that fail to meet corporate average fuel economy (CAFE) standards, created by Congress in 1975 and strengthened over the years.

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Those policy changes have prompted car companies to walk back their commitments to sell more EVs, canceling planned factories and laying off workers. Analysts have slashed their predictions for future EV sales and raised their projections for greenhouse gas pollution. General Motors, which once vowed to only sell EVs by 2035, has shifted billions of dollars of planned investments from electric to gas-powered cars.

Federal fuel rules have ping-ponged from stricter to weaker standards as the White House has changed hands.

The back-and-forth policy changes have put U.S. automakers in a difficult position, according to Rich Gold, a lobbyist who heads the public policy and regulation group at Holland & Knight.

“What the industry really needs is to be able to plan for a decade,” Gold said. “The auto industry doesn’t deal well with disruption and uncertainty. The infrastructure to build cars and get them to where they need to go takes a long time to build out.”

Even so, Gold said, automakers are happier with Trump’s lax rules than they were with Biden’s strict standards, which he said would have been hard to achieve. “It’s a great day for us at Stellantis today, because it’s a day where we see CAFE regulation reconciled with real customers’ demand,” Stellantis CEO Antonio Filosa told Trump at the White House.

“Today’s action is a win for American drivers,” American Petroleum Institute President Mike Sommers wrote in a statement. “We commend President Trump and Secretary Duffy for restoring commonsense fuel-economy standards that recognize the realities of today’s marketplace and the need to preserve affordable choices for families and businesses.”

Environmentalists, meanwhile, lamented the latest blow to U.S. fuel economy rules.

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