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Trump says he will repeal Biden-era fuel efficiency standards for cars and trucks

Move marks president's latest effort to dismantle pollution regulations and support for cleaner-running vehicles

By Lucy Campbell

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Donald Trump announced on Wednesday that he is repealing the Biden-era federal fuel economy standards, significantly weakening fuel efficiency requirements for tens of millions of new gasoline-powered cars and light trucks.

It marks the US president's latest effort to dismantle pollution regulations and federal support for cleaner-running vehicles and renewable energy. Burning

gasoline is a significant contributor to global heating and transportation is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the United States.

“We are officially terminating Joe Biden’s ridiculously burdensome, horrible actually, CAFE standards that imposed expensive restrictions,” Trump said in an Oval Office announcement, flanked by top auto executives including the CEOs of Ford and Stellantis. “It put tremendous upward pressure on car prices, combined with the insane electric vehicle mandate.”

The Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards, first established in 1975, set the average fuel economy targets for new vehicles and have been tightened over the years to make vehicles more fuel-efficient.

The Biden administration proposed modest increases to the requirements for the vehicles most Americans drive as part of a push to promote electric vehicles and address the climate emergency. Joe Biden required automakers to increase the fuel efficiency of passenger cars and light trucks to about 50 miles per gallon by 2031.

Trump is now rolling that back, loosening regulatory pressure on automakers to control pollution from gasoline-powered cars and trucks. The standards proposed by him would require cars to get about 34 miles to the gallon by 2031, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Wednesday’s announcement marks the latest action by the Trump administration to reverse Biden-era policies that encouraged cleaner energy vehicles, including relaxing auto tailpipe emissions rules, repealing fines for automakers that don’t meet federal mileage standards and terminating consumer credits of up to \$7,500 for electric vehicle purchases.

Trump, who calls the climate crisis a “hoax” and whose administration is in the grips of a cost of living crisis, said he was seeking to weaken the rules in order to make new cars more affordable. “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,” said his transportation secretary, Sean Duffy, who was also in the Oval Office. “This is important for American jobs. The more cars we sell, the more jobs we have in this country.””

Gutting the CAFE program would “make cars burn more gas and American families burn more cash”, Katherine García, the director of the Clean Transportation for All program at the Sierra Club, said in a statement.

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