The Guardian

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"Trump is tanking sensible mile per gallon standards at the worst possible time for consumers, who are getting hit with sky-high prices at the pump," Becker said in a statement. "Consumers will pay the price for these reckless rollbacks while Trump's Big Oil and Big Auto buddies reap the short-term profits."

Trump administration to slash clean car rules aimed at cutting climate emissions

Environmentalists decry move that relaxes requirements on automakers to control pollution from gas-powered cars

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The Trump administration on Monday announced it was slashing clean car rules that had been aimed at reducing planet-heating emissions and boosting electric vehicles.

The move, which was criticized by environmentalists, relaxes requirements on automakers to control pollution from gasoline-powered cars and light trucks for model years 2022 through 2031.

The new rule, announced by the Department of Transportation, reverses a push by the Biden administration to accelerate the transition to EVs. Transportation is the largest source of climate emissions in the United States, accounting for about 28% of total US greenhouse gas emissions according to the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Monday's move follows the Trump administration's rollback of the government's ability to impose requirements to track, report and limit climate-heating pollution from cars and trucks.

Donald Trump said on Truth Social on Saturday that the less stringent mileage requirements would "take the waste out of building cars in America" and save families "thousands on a new, beautiful and safe car", while boosting auto production in the US.

Trump has repeatedly pledged to end what he falsely calls an EV "mandate", referring incorrectly to Joe Biden's target that half of all new vehicle sales be electric by 2030. No federal policy has mandated auto companies to sell EVs.

Sean Duffy, the US transportation secretary, hailed the new initiative – called Freedom Means Affordable Cars – which the agency said would reduce the average cost of new vehicles by $1,300, and save consumers $138bn over the next five years.

Duffy said: "Thanks to President Trump's leadership, we have finally ended the illegal mandate that forced automakers to produce more expensive electric vehicles that American families didn't want."

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Katherine García, director of the Sierra Club's Clean transportation for all campaign, vowed the environmental group would fight the rule and said that the loosening of fuel standards would "make driving more expensive too".

Fuel economy requirements set out how far new vehicles need to travel on a gallon of gasoline. The Biden administration had increased required fuel efficiency for cars by 8% annually for model years 2024 and 2025, 10% for 2026 and 2% annually from 2027 to 2031.

The Trump administration in December proposed retroactively revising down the 2022 model year fuel economy standard and then raising it between 0.25% and 0.5% annually through 2031. It estimated its proposal would cut average new vehicle costs by $930 each.

But it would increase fuel consumption by about 100bn gallons through 2050, fuel spending by $185bn and carbon dioxide emissions by about 5%, the department said.

The American Lung Association's president and CEO, Harold Wimmer, said the new rule will "create more air pollution, harm health and accelerate climate change".

Wimmer added: “For decades, fuel economy standards have ensured that new cars, SUVs and pickup trucks are more efficient, which saves lives and money. There is no reason to weaken standards that are technologically feasible and have a direct benefit for the quality of the air people breathe.

“Children are particularly vulnerable to the effects of traffic pollution, which can impede lung growth, cause new cases of pediatric asthma, make asthma symptoms worse and increase kids’ risk of respiratory infection and diseases.”

Wimmer added that making new cars cleaner had widespread public support, citing a poll the group did that found a strong majority of voters supported stricter limits on vehicle emissions.

https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2026/sep/28/trump-administration-slashes-clean-car-rules