



Trump's Transportation Dept. Rolls Back Fuel Efficiency Standards Despite Surging Gas Prices

Dan Becker, director of the Center for Biological Diversity's Safe Climate Transport Campaign, told PBS that "Trump is tanking sensible miles-per-gallon standards at the worst possible time for consumers, who are getting hit with sky-high prices at the pump."

Because fuel inefficiency and smog are Americans' most popular issues right now.

By: Tom McKay

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President Donald Trump once again has his finger on the pulse of the nation, and he's identified what the people are yearning for in these trying times: dirtier cars that cost more to drive.

With the war with Iran driving diesel to [all-time record national averages](#) of around \$6.50 a gallon, and the Trump administration considering a diesel export freeze that may drive [gasoline even higher](#) from its national average of around [\\$4.48 a gallon](#), it's the perfect time to lower fuel efficiency standards, apparently. The Transportation Department announced on Monday it had [finalized a rule](#) revoking Joe Biden-era standards that would have required fleet average fuel economy for light-duty vehicles to hit 50.4 miles per gallon by 2031—according to [The Verge](#), the new target is 34.9 miles per gallon by 2031 (the target was 30.1 miles per gallon in 2024).

White House officials claim rolling back the rules, known as Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards, will save consumers \$138 billion over the next five years, or around \$1,300 per new vehicle. The Transportation Department, however, [also acknowledged](#) that consumers would pay \$1,600 more in gas over the lifetime of a vehicle, and the rollback would also increase gas demand by 4.6% through 2035.

The Transportation Department promoted it as “among the largest deregulatory actions under the second Trump administration,” with Secretary of Transportation Sean Duffy [boasting that](#)

the admin had “finally ended the illegal mandate that forced automakers to produce more expensive electric vehicles that American families didn’t want.”

Environmental groups estimate revoking the CAFE rules means that by 2035, U.S. vehicles will annually pump out many more tons of carbon dioxide, “deadly smog,” and smog components, [PBS reported](#).

Automakers have generally supported lower standards; industry group Alliance for Automotive Innovation [told Reuters](#) the original standards “effectively required a switchover to electric vehicles that was out of step with market realities and customer demand.” (They did not, and what’s more, automakers have [largely been free](#) to ignore CAFE standards since Republicans in Congress [eliminated](#) noncompliance fines last year.)

Trump has [also eliminated](#) a federal tax credit for new electric vehicles worth up to \$7,500 and federal tailpipe emission standards. Auto standards were a recurring theme in his first administration, when Trump knocked down Barack Obama-era standards that would have required fleet average fuel economy to [hit 54.5 miles per gallon by 2025](#) (which one might notice was *last* year).

Case Western Reserve University auto industry expert Sue Helper [told NPR](#) that diluting the CAFE standards will be “very bad in the long term, because it slows progress” and makes U.S. cars less competitive.

It might benefit manufacturers of trucks and SUVs in the short term, because they’re popular in the U.S.—but that’s a “protected little Galapagos of an ecosystem where no one else is wanting to compete,” Helper added.

Dan Becker, director of the Center for Biological Diversity’s Safe Climate Transport Campaign, told PBS that “Trump is tanking sensible miles-per-gallon standards at the worst possible time for consumers, who are getting hit with sky-high prices at the pump.” Katherine García, director of the Clean Transportation for All project at the Sierra Club, told the broadcaster that the changes mean “more gas burned, spending more at the pump, and dirtier air in our communities.”

<https://gizmodo.com/trumps-transportation-dept-rolls-back-fuel-efficiency-standards-despite-surge-gas-prices-2000818562>