



What are clean car standards?

In 2012, the Obama administration made history by finalizing the strongest-ever fuel economy and vehicle pollution standards for new cars and light trucks, drastically reduce climate-disrupting pollution, and cut oil use nationwide. Stringent vehicle standards are our most important policy tool to address pollution from the transportation sector, which is the leading source of carbon pollution in the US.

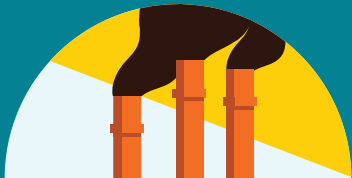
But in 2020, the Trump administration severely weakened the clean car standards in one of its most significant attacks on climate policy. Many automakers, including General Motors and Toyota, sided with Donald Trump's illegal attacks on clean car standards instead of joining [a 2019 compromise deal with California](#).

Although some manufacturers, like Ford, committed to the California compromise standards, the auto industry as a whole is guilty of lobbying the Trump administration for weaker standards.

The Trump administration also revoked a long-standing Clean Air Act waiver that allowed California, as well as 14 other states and the District of Columbia, to institute standards to reduce vehicle emissions and clean up the air that were more ambitious than the federal government's.

Over the past several years, a national coalition of environmental, consumer, environmental justice, health, faith, labor, and family advocacy groups has fought back against these dangerous attacks on vehicle pollution standards.

What are the benefits of clean car standards?



Preventing billions of tons of climate-disrupting pollution from being released into the atmosphere



Saving drivers thousands of dollars at the pump



Protecting communities from dangerous air pollution, especially low-income and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) communities, which suffer higher rates of asthma and other respiratory illnesses

What's happening with clean car standards now?

We have a pivotal opportunity to secure the boldest clean car standards yet, and we need all hands on deck. The Biden EPA just proposed new standards, marking a first step toward restoring and strengthening this crucial policy tool. The significance of these standards can't be overstated: A firm rule would make them the nation's strongest tool for slashing climate-disrupting emissions.

Unfortunately, the EPA's proposed rule doesn't go far enough. It is far too weak to get us on the path to 100 percent zero-emission vehicles by 2035 at the latest, and it contains loopholes that would allow auto manufacturers to double down on gas-guzzling vehicles. For example, automakers get extra credits for manufacturing electric vehicles, which they can use to offset the emissions they create by manufacturing gas guzzlers. The current proposal would treat each electric vehicle as multiple zero-emission vehicles when measuring compliance—allowing automakers to crank out even more fossil-fuel powered cars.

The proposal would result in much less pollution reduction than the auto industry agreed to nearly a decade ago in 2012, despite the enormous progress that's occurred on electric vehicles. The latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change offers stronger warnings about the climate crisis than ever before: The damage from burning fossil fuels will only worsen unless we rapidly slash climate-disrupting emissions.

[You can submit your personalized comment on this proposed rule right now](#), urging the EPA to do more to protect our climate and public health.

Contact: If you'd like to get involved with the Sierra Club's advocacy around a stronger rule during the public comment period, which lasts until September 27, there's a lot of ways to do so. Please contact Rebekah Whilden at rebekah.whilden@sierraclub.org.

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