

CAR RULES

24 governors back Calif. over Trump

Maxine Joselow, E&E News reporter • Published: Tuesday, July 9, 2019



Twenty-four governors signed a pledge to support California in its standoff with the Trump administration over clean car standards. nile/pixabay

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Twenty-four governors today signed a pledge to support California in its standoff with the Trump administration over clean car standards.

The governors — including three Republicans — vowed to uphold the more stringent Obama-era standards, which President Trump is poised to roll back imminently.

"We, the undersigned 24 governors — a bipartisan coalition representing 52% of the U.S. population and 57% of the economy — stand together in calling for one strong, national clean car standard and support preserving state authority to protect our residents from vehicle pollution," the governors **wrote**.

"Strong vehicle standards protect our communities from unnecessary air pollution and fuel costs, and they address the largest source of carbon pollution in the United States," they added.

The governors are all members of the U.S. Climate Alliance, a bipartisan coalition committed to upholding the goals of the Paris Agreement.

The three Republicans are Larry Hogan of Maryland, Charlie Baker of Massachusetts and Phil Scott of Vermont. Besides California and Puerto Rico, the other leaders are from Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin.

The Trump administration is proposing to significantly weaken the Obama-era standards through 2026, allowing cars to travel much shorter distances on a single tank of gas.

Just as consequentially, the administration is proposing to revoke California's Clean Air Act waiver for greenhouse gases, which enshrines the state's legal authority to set tougher tailpipe pollution rules than the federal government.

The governors' pledge hints at the numerous lawsuits likely to hit the Trump administration once it finalizes the rollback later this summer.

Sen. Tom Carper of Delaware, the top Democrat on the Environment and Public Works Committee, today urged automakers to work with the states to stave off years of litigation.

"Since the Trump administration seems determined to put all environmental progress into reverse, automakers should make clear that they will not support this rollback by working directly with California and these 23 states to drive automobile technology into the future," Carper said in a statement.

Gloria Bergquist, a spokeswoman for the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers, a powerful trade association whose members include General Motors Co. and Ford Motor Co., said member companies remain hopeful that states and the administration will reach a compromise on the rules.

"It is untenable to face a marketplace with different standards in different states, but it is also untenable to face standards that rise so high that only a handful of electric vehicles can achieve them," Bergquist said. "We encourage both the federal government and states to come together and meet midway on a final rule that is good for the environment, achievable and consistent across the 50 states."

Asked for comment, EPA spokesman Michael Abboud said in an emailed statement to E&E News, "As the Administration has long stated, we are pursuing one national standard to provide safe, affordable vehicles for consumers while also improving environmental outcomes."

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