

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 22, 2025

The Honorable Lee Zeldin
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Zeldin,

To address the climate crisis, safeguard public health, and protect our economy, we write to urge the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Trump administration to reverse course on your ill-advised rollback of federal standards for greenhouse gas emissions from passenger cars and medium and heavy-duty trucks. By proposing to eliminate the 2009 endangerment finding on climate emissions from motor vehicles, the underlying basis for EPA's regulatory ability to address tailpipe climate pollution, EPA is shirking its statutory responsibility to protect human health and the environment, violating the Clean Air Act and Supreme Court precedent, and ignoring the directives of Congress. If the Trump administration persists with eliminating federal vehicle greenhouse gas emissions standards, it will be responsible for damaging the environment, hurting public health, costing drivers money, cutting American jobs and competitiveness, and increasing our dependence on foreign oil.

Robust federal vehicle emission standards are a critical tool for addressing the climate crisis and protecting public health. In the United States, transportation is the leading source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, accounting for 28 percent of total direct emissions. Cars and trucks contribute 80 percent of the emissions within the transportation sector.¹ Dismantling clean vehicle regulations would leave GHG emissions unchecked, which will lead to worsening climate change and increasingly severe extreme weather events. These disasters hurt our communities and exact an astronomical cost in both public and private spending—over the past year alone, disaster-related spending cost the United States nearly \$1 trillion.²

Transportation-related air pollution hurts public health. Climate change caused by GHG emissions has driven record temperatures across the nation, doubling the number of heat-related deaths in the United States since 1999.³ Transportation is a major source of particulate matter and other toxic air pollution, severely affecting communities' ability to breathe clean air and causing

¹ *Transportation Sector Emissions*, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, <https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/transportation-sector-emissions> (last updated Mar. 31, 2025).

² Eric Roston, *US Spending on Climate Damage Nears \$1 Trillion Per Year*, Bloomberg (June 17, 2025), <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2025-06-17/us-spending-on-climate-damage-nears-1-trillion-per-year>.

³ Austyn Gaffney, *Heat Deaths Have Doubled in the U.S. in Recent Decades, Study Finds*, N.Y. Times (Aug. 27, 2024), <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/27/climate/heat-deaths.html>.

asthma, cancer, and other chronic illnesses. Studies show that deaths increase on days with both high temperatures and poor air quality, relative to days during which only one factor is present.⁴

Removing clean car and truck safeguards would also increase costs for consumers. Studies show that strong clean vehicle standards have saved drivers more than \$9,000 per vehicle in fuel since 2001, and if current policies are kept in place, drivers will save an additional \$6,000 in fuel savings per vehicle over the next five years.⁵ Without standards, the next generation of American vehicles would become significantly more expensive to fuel, maintain, and repair, no longer saving drivers money at the pump.

The world is transitioning to a zero-emission transportation system, and ignoring that reality puts the future of the American auto industry at risk. In 2024, 69 percent of U.S. vehicle exports went to countries with electric vehicle sales requirements, and 62 percent went to countries planning to ban internal combustion engine vehicles entirely.⁶ In 2024, the clean vehicles industry employed more than 410,000 Americans, a figure that includes workers manufacturing parts and components to make vehicles cleaner and more fuel-efficient.⁷ The clean vehicle job sector grew faster than the gas- and diesel-powered vehicle industry, adding about 60 percent more jobs between 2021 and 2024. Repealing vehicle emission standards would ruin the momentum and hand the future of the automotive industry to global competitors.

Rolling back standards threatens American energy independence by deepening our reliance on foreign oil. Only 60 percent of the oil in U.S. fuel refineries is extracted in the United States.⁸ The remaining 40 percent is imported, making our system linked to volatile global markets. For instance, when Russia invaded Ukraine, gas prices jumped 50 cents a gallon in just one week—a reminder that dependence on oil leaves American drivers at the whims of foreign countries.⁹

Americans should be able to drive and share the road with cleaner, more efficient vehicles that help clean up our air, save families money at the pump, and strengthen American competitiveness and energy independence. We urge you not to destroy these life- and cost-saving

⁴ Massimo Stafoggia et al., *Joint effect of heat and air pollution on mortality in 620 cities of 36 countries*, National Library of Medicine (Oct. 10, 2023), <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/37837748/>.

⁵ Chris Harto, *Blog: Strong Efficiency and Emissions Standards Deliver Thousands in Fuel Savings for Consumers*, Consumer Reports, (Jan. 14, 2025), <https://advocacy.consumerreports.org/research/blog-strong-efficiency-and-emissions-standards-deliver-thousands-in-fuel-savings-for-consumers/>.

⁶ *Get Connected: Electric Vehicle Quarterly Report, First Quarter 2025*, Alliance for Automotive Innovation (2025), <https://www.autosinnovate.org/posts/papers-reports/Get%20Connected%20EV%20Quarterly%20Report%202025%20Q1.pdf>.

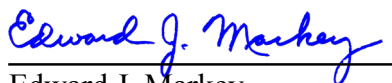
⁷ *Clean Jobs America 2024*, E2 (Sept. 2024), https://cleanjobsamerica.e2.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/E2-2024-Clean-Jobs-America-Report_September-17-2024.pdf.

⁸ AFPM Communications, *How Much Oil Does the United States Import (and Why)?*, AFPM (Jan. 24, 2025), <https://www.afpm.org/newsroom/blog/how-much-oil-does-united-states-import-and-why>.

⁹ Zachary Snowdon Smith, *U.S. Gas Prices Near All-Time High As Ukraine War Threatens Energy Market*, Forbes (Mar. 15, 2022), <https://www.forbes.com/sites/zacharysmith/2022/03/07/us-gas-prices-near-all-time-high-as-ukraine-war-threatens-energy-market/>.

vehicle emission standards on the basis of faulty science and unlawful attacks on the clean air statutes passed by Congress.

Sincerely,



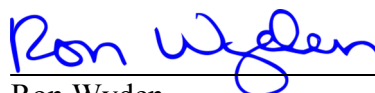
Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator
Ranking Member
Committee on Environment
and Public Works



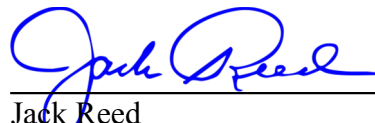
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