**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Editorial Board

**FR:**

**RE:** The Trump Administration Rolls Back Clean Car Standards and Attacks States’ Authority

**DA:** July [DATE], 2018

On [DATE], President Trump, Acting EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler, and Acting NHTSA Administrator Heidi King moved to roll back America’s clean clear standards and revoke states’ longstanding authority to put into place stronger limits on tailpipe pollution when federal standards fail to protect their citizens. This authority was established in the 1970s and was championed by then-governor of California Ronald Reagan. At present, 13 states and the District of Columbia—representing 113 million people and over a third of the automotive market—have exercised their right to establish strong tailpipe pollution standards to protect their citizens and environment. Now, the Trump administration wants to dismantle Reagan’s legacy and reestablish top-down decision-making in Washington.

The Trump Administration is steamrolling states and American families in their quest to do the bidding of deep-pocketed corporations and their Washington lobbyists. At a time when gas prices have just hit a four-year high, rolling back the clean car standards will force American families to spend more money at the pump and rob them of billions of dollars of savings from more fuel-efficient cars, pickup trucks, and SUVs. It will also increase air pollution—triggering more asthma attacks and worsening climate change.

[The vast majority of Americans—including a plurality (48 percent) of Republicans—want the clean car standards to remain in place](http://www.lung.org/about-us/media/press-releases/new-poll-voters-support-fuel-efficiency.html). They support these commonsense standards for good reason: they’re saving Americans billions of dollars while cutting air pollution.

We ask your newspaper to write an editorial or column opposing President Trump’s attempts to gut the clean car standards because it endangers [STATE]’s families, will cost drivers billions of dollars at the pump, and revokes states’ longstanding authority to manage air pollution within their own borders.

**Safe, Clean, Fuel-efficient Cars**

* The Trump administration is using debunked claims about vehicle safety to justify its rollback of the clean car standards. But they’re grasping for excuses—and coming up short. Research shows that fuel efficiency standards have made drivers safer. Scientists studying federal Corporate Average Fuel Efficiency (CAFE) standards found that [the original CAFE program saved hundreds of lives every year on average](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2017/05/03/scientists-just-debunked-one-of-the-biggest-arguments-against-fuel-economy-standards-for-cars/?utm_term=.04b1a9604c70) since it was introduced in 1975.
* American innovation has ensured that today’s new cars and trucks are some of the safest ever built, and thanks to the clean car standards they also cost less to operate and pump less pollution into our air.
* Time and time again the Trump administration has shown it doesn’t care about protecting Americans’ health or safety. This rollback isn’t about making families safer; it’s about doling out special favors to Big Oil and the Trump Administration’s allies in the auto industry.
* Reversing the clean car standards would hold back the most advanced and fuel-efficient vehicles the American people have ever known—harming their health and costing them money.

**Fighting Climate Change and Protecting Our Health**

* The transportation sector is now the country’s [largest source of the carbon pollution that causes climate change](https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/sources-greenhouse-gas-emissions); cars, SUVs, and pickup trucks are the largest source of pollution within this sector.
* Rolling these standards back will expose millions of Americans to more climate-changing carbon pollution, jeopardizing our health.
* The Trump Administration’s push for dirtier, less efficient vehicles would pump more carbon pollution into our air, which could lead to more intense and destructive extreme weather events like Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria. 25 million Americans – including more than 6 million children – suffer from asthma. We shouldn’t be rolling back safeguards that protect them.

**States’ Legal Authority to Limit Tailpipe Pollution**

* 13 states plus the District of Columbia have exercised their right to adopt more protective tailpipe pollution standards to protect their citizens and environment. Millions of Americans are breathing easier thanks to these states’ commitment to bringing cleaner, more efficient cars to the road.
* Rolling back clean car standards will hurt all Americans, but the Trump Administration’s revocation of states’ authority is an all-out assault on the 113 million people living in states that have moved beyond the EPA to protect their health of their communities.
* States must be allowed to manage vehicle pollution within their borders, as the Clean Air Act intended. For more than 50 years, U.S. states have had the explicit right to protect their residents’ health by reducing tailpipe pollution. By revoking states’ authority under the law, Trump, Wheeler, and King are gutting the state rights that they claim to support.
* [STATE]’s leaders should vigorously resist any effort to strip its right under the Clean Air Act to protect our community from dirty air and water.

**Gas Prices**

* Gas prices are spiking just as the summer driving season is getting underway—and families can’t afford to spend any more of their money at the pump. Clean cars standards protect family budgets from the gas price rollercoaster, and they especially protect households with the lowest incomes. If Trump, Wheeler, and King succeed in rolling back the clean car standards, they’ll ensure Americans pay more at the pump. Trump’s rollback will make America’s cars and trucks less fuel-efficient, meaning that Americans will have to fill up more often even if they drive the same number of miles.
* America’s clean car standards have saved drivers more than $50 billion and counting. Advancements in fuel efficiency—spurred by clean car standards—are designed to save Americans money. Current clean car standards could save consumers as much as $5,700 per car and $8,200 per truck over the lifetime of their vehicle. Rolling back the standards breaks a promise to the American people, making these savings vanish into thin air.

**A Handout to Polluters, Big Oil and Washington Lobbyists**

* Trump and his Dirty Deputies have shown they’ll do almost anything to line the pockets of polluting industries and Big Oil, even if it harms American families. Trump doesn’t care about making Americans safer or ensuring that our kids have clean air and clean water. He’s selling out [STATE DEMONYMS]’s health for corporate interests.