

Contact: Paul J. Miller
NESCAUM Executive Director
617-259-2016
pmiller@nescaum.org
www.nescaum.org

September 18, 2019

NESCAUM Response to Trump Administration Announcement Revoking California's Authority to Require Cleaner Cars

*Statement of Dr. Paul J. Miller, Executive Director
Northeast States for Coordinated Air Use Management*

Today, in an unprecedented and unprovoked action without legal basis, the Trump Administration announced it is revoking a waiver that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) granted years ago to California for measures providing year-over-year greenhouse gas reductions from automobiles and requiring automakers to sell more electric cars.

The damage inflicted by this announcement, however, is not limited only to California – it also amounts to a flagrant attack on state efforts to ward off the disastrous consequences of global warming.

These measures are among the basic building blocks we need to avoid the worst effects of human-caused climate change, as well as attainment and maintenance of our states' ozone standard.

At its core, this action blatantly dismisses the fundamental right of our states to protect public health and welfare as embodied within the structure of the federal Clean Air Act. This is a state right that we have embraced, have implemented, and will defend.

Under the Clean Air Act, both the U.S. EPA and California are authorized to establish motor vehicle emission standards, provided that California receives a “waiver of preemption” from U.S. EPA. The Clean Air Act also permits other states to adopt and enforce California standards in lieu of federal standards.

By revoking the California waiver, the federal government is standing in the way of California and the 13 other states that opted to follow the California standards from doing their part to reduce harmful emissions from cars and trucks, which is a key component of state climate action plans.

To make matters worse, this puts the oil industry's interests ahead of the U.S. EPA's public duty to address climate pollution as the federal government aggressively pursues the wholesale gutting of national greenhouse gas reduction requirements. This action also destabilizes the American automobile industry and hampers the ability of these companies to compete in a global marketplace that values electric vehicles.

Today's announcement is a direct challenge to the basic premise of the Clean Air Act and an ill-advised attempt to reverse state progress toward a clean, low-carbon transportation sector. The action ignores federal law, congressional intent, and scientific evidence. Moreover, the authority of states to address greenhouse gas emissions from motor vehicles is clearly and unequivocally supported by judicial decisions and by tens of millions of people across the United States.

Our states benefit from the continued reductions in motor vehicle pollution that the California program provides. Revoking California's waiver encroaches on the rights of states to protect the health of their citizens and the environment and undermines their leadership role in averting the worst impacts from global climate change. Our states stand by their commitment to bring clean cars to their states and will do what it takes to defend this important right. We look forward to continuing to work with the automobile industry to grow the electric vehicle market in the Northeast.

About NESCAUM

The Northeast States for Coordinated Air Use Management (NESCAUM) is a nonprofit multistate association of the eight state air quality agencies in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont. NESCAUM provides scientific, technical, analytical, and policy support to the air quality and climate programs of its air agency members, including assistance with the implementation of national environmental programs required under the Clean Air Act and other federal legislation.

###