

AUTOMOTIVE

Trump's planned rollback on auto emissions regulations has environmental consequences

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American auto brands such as Lexus would benefit from the change. Image credit: Lexus

By DANNY PARISI

The Trump administration has announced a new plan to roll back regulations on emissions for U.S.-made cars in a continued effort to bolster American products over those made in other countries.

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New standards would be much lower than those currently in place and would allow automakers to produce cars with far higher emissions levels. While this may give a boost to American car companies, the flipside is that it will likely exacerbate already catastrophic carbon levels in the atmosphere.

Emissions regulations

On Thursday, Aug. 2, the Trump administration announced plans to roll back Obama-era regulations that placed a high standard for emissions on American car brands.

Rolling back those regulations would allow cars with higher emissions to be produced and sold. The current regulations demand that automakers continuously improve on fuel efficiency until 2025, a responsibility that can be an expensive effort for brands.

With those rulings rolled back, brands would get some revenue back that they could theoretically use on other pursuits.

Nineteen states, along with Washington, D.C., have announced plans to sue the federal government in objection to this ruling, citing the deleterious effect it would have on the environment.



President Trump's emissions rollbacks would have negative effects on the environment. Image credit: Gage Skidmore via Flickr

California is leading the charge. The state has stricter emissions standards than the national regulations, which many other states in the country have adopted.

The Trump administration says that this rollback would give a boost to U.S. auto brands, freeing them up from stifling regulations to make more cars and bolster the economy.

But this view is contested by many critics, who point out that auto emissions are a major contributing factor to global warming. Per the dissenters, allowing the U.S., one of the largest car producers in the world, to create cars with high emissions would be disastrous for efforts to combat climate change.

An automotive trade group is hoping that California and the federal government can find a compromise.

"Automakers support continued improvements in fuel economy and flexibilities that incentivize advanced technologies while balancing priorities like affordability, safety, jobs and the environment," said the Association of Global Automakers in a statement. "With today's release of the administration's proposals, it's time for substantive negotiations to begin.

"We urge California and the federal government to find a common sense solution that sets continued increases in vehicle efficiency standards while also meeting the needs of America's drivers," it said.

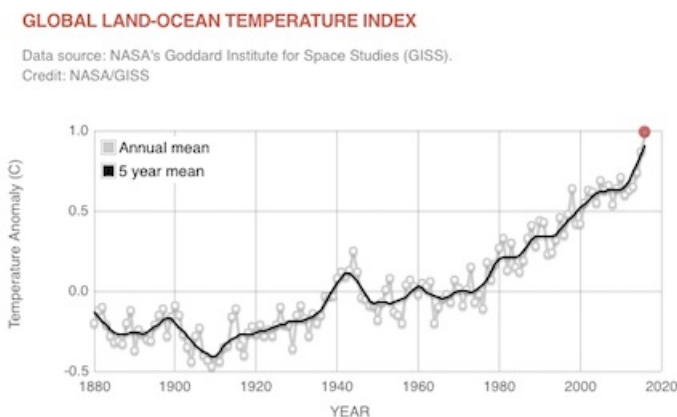
Environmental consequences

After walking back some of his more aggressive threats on tariffs, President Donald Trump has publicly contemplated placing heavy duties on imported cars.

While likely aimed at cars produced in China, a popular target for the president's ire, the proposed tariff would also affect luxury cars such as Rolls-Royce and Ferrari. The tariffs the president proposed would reach up to 25 percent, placing a significant toll on foreign exporters and the customers in the U.S. who desire foreign cars ([see story](#)).

The proposed tariffs on imported cars, which President Trump reportedly meant to target German luxury cars, combined with lowered regulations on American-made cars, are meant to be a boost to the U.S. auto industry.

However, the drawbacks of this plan would not be worth the benefits.



Sea level rise since 1995. Source: NASA

Virtually all reputable studies of the Earth's climate over the past few decades have shown that the temperature of the planet is changing at an alarmingly fast rate.

This is the consensus among climate scientists who have been desperately trying to get people to pay attention to this growing crisis for years. While luxury brands may think that climate change is something that will have a bigger effect on governments than on business sectors, the truth is that climate change can and will have a major impact on how luxury brands and manufacturers do business ([see story](#)).

Whatever boost these changes may give to the auto market will come at the cost of releasing more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere and exacerbating the already warming trend of the planet.

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