

Trump revokes California's authority to set auto emissions limits

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US President Donald Trump says he is taking away California's authority to set its own stricter automobile emissions standards

President Donald Trump announced Wednesday that his administration is revoking California's authority to set its own stricter emissions

standards, days before a major UN summit on averting climate change disaster.

The move came after the state reached a deal with major automakers to produce more fuel-efficient cars for the US market, infuriating federal authorities who claimed the agreement violated anti-trust laws.

"The Trump Administration is revoking California's Federal Waiver on emissions in order to produce far less expensive cars for the consumer, while at the same time making the cars substantially SAFER," Trump tweeted.

The administration argues that higher standards lead to higher costs for consumers, depressing the new car market and resulting in more old and unsafe vehicles on the roads.

Trump, who made the announcement during a trip to California, added: "There will be very little difference in emissions between the California Standard and the new U.S. Standard, but the cars will be far safer and much less expensive.

"Many more cars will be produced under the new and uniform standard, meaning significantly more JOBS, JOBS, JOBS! Automakers should seize this opportunity because without this alternative to California, you will be out of business."

California officials and climate experts, however, quickly dismissed the president's assertions, saying the plan to undermine the overwhelmingly Democratic state's power will harm the environment and end up costing consumers.

"Your standards will cost consumers \$400 billion. Result in 320 billion more gallons of oil burned and spewed into our air. And hurt car

companies' ability to compete in a global market," Governor Gavin Newsom said in a tweet.

"It's bad for our air. Bad for our health. Bad for our economy."

Critics have also noted the administration's move appears to go against the principle of states' rights, a position otherwise championed by the president's Republican party.



Motor vehicles drive on the 101 freeway in Los Angeles, California on September 17, 2019

'Hellbent on reversing progress'

"The Trump administration, for some reason, is hellbent on reversing decades of history and progress," former Republican California governor and actor Arnold Schwarzenegger said in an opinion piece in The Washington Post.

"Whether it is political pettiness, shortsightedness or just plain jealousy, I couldn't tell you," he added. "I can tell you that it's wrong. It's un-American. And it's an affront to long-standing conservative principles."

Julia Stein, project director for Emmett Institute on Climate Change and the Environment at the University of California Los Angeles, said Trump's plan was likely to get bogged down with legal challenges and would lead to a period of uncertainty and turmoil in the auto market.

"The administration's action comes at a time when respected climate scientists have suggested that we need to redouble, not relax, our efforts to address climate change," she said.

California's special status allowing it to set its own emission controls dates back to the 1970 Clean Air Act.

The decision to revoke that status comes after California—which has been a thorn in the president's side since he took office—secretly negotiated a deal with four major carmakers that voluntarily agreed to abide by the state's stricter rules.

Under the deal, the automakers pledged to make increasingly efficient vehicles that can average 50 miles per gallon by 2025.

The White House responded to the agreement by having the Department of Justice launch an antitrust investigation against the automakers—Ford, Volkswagen, Honda and BMW.



Founder of Fridays For Future Greta Thunberg testifies during a House Foreign Affairs Committee Europe, Eurasia, Energy and the Environment Subcommittee and House (Select) Climate Crisis Committee joint hearing September 18, 2019 on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC.

Trump also reportedly summoned other carmakers to the White House to warn them against agreeing to a similar deal.

His announcement on Wednesday took place as Swedish teen activist Greta Thunberg testified before the US Congress about the climate crisis.

The 16-year-old Swede was joined by other campaigners who said looming uncertainty caused by inaction over climate change has led younger generations to question the intentions of today's political leaders.

Thunberg and 500 other youth activists are taking part next week in the first ever Youth Climate Summit at the United Nations.

That is to be followed on September 23 by a Climate Action Summit convened by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to ask countries to enhance their carbon reduction commitments in order to avert runaway global warming scenarios envisaged by scientists.

Guterres lashed out at Trump's announcement on Wednesday, saying he strongly favored a decentralized approach to combating climate change.

"I think it's important—and this is true for many countries in the world—that cities and states and regions have the capacity to develop all positive measures in relation to climate action," he told reporters at a news conference.

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