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Attorney General T.J. Donovan and Vermont Agency of Natural Resources Secretary Julie Moore Oppose Rollback of Vehicle Emissions and Fuel Economy Standards

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Attorney General Thomas J. Donovan, Jr., and Vermont Agency of Natural Resources Secretary Julie Moore announced today that the State of Vermont will continue to vigorously oppose the United States Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) planned efforts to weaken greenhouse gas emission and fuel economy standards for 2022-2025 model year cars and light-duty trucks. [Late Tuesday, the EPA announced that it had completed its mid-term evaluation process for greenhouse gas emission standards](#) for cars and light duty trucks for

model years 2022-2025 and determined that the standards were too stringent. The EPA and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) intend to begin rulemaking to [weaken greenhouse gas emission standards and Corporate Average Fuel Economy \(CAFE\) standards](#). EPA's threat to weaken the federal standards will endanger both public health and the environment and make driving more expensive.

"Vermonters want and deserve clean air," said Attorney General Donovan. "These standards are key points in the fight against climate change. They help save consumers money on fuel. For years, Vermont has been a leader on motor vehicle emission standards and let me be clear: Vermont is going to stay committed to clean air and we will take necessary steps to fight this rollback."

"The Agency of Natural Resources is committed to protecting Vermont's air quality and the health and well-being of Vermonters," said Agency of Natural Resources Secretary Julie Moore. "Collectively, the cars and trucks we drive are among the largest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions in Vermont. Stringent vehicle emission standards are critical to our ability to achieve Vermont's emission reduction goals."

The existing standards are the product of a collaborative effort by the EPA, NHTSA (which regulates fuel-economy), the State of California, and the auto industry to develop a national program that would reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve fuel economy. In 2012, the EPA and NHTSA adopted increasingly stringent greenhouse gas emission and fuel economy standards for 2017-2025 model year cars and light-duty trucks. California was authorized to implement its own more stringent, greenhouse gas emissions standards, and 12 states – including Vermont – have adopted California's standards. Vermont has also adopted California's low-emission vehicle standards, limiting emissions of smog-forming pollution, as well as the zero-emission vehicle program, requiring auto manufacturers to sell a certain percentage of plug-in hybrid and battery electric vehicles in Vermont.

When it adopted the standards in 2012, EPA agreed to complete a midterm evaluation to assess if the standards for model year 2022-25 remained appropriate. Under the prior administration, the EPA completed its midterm evaluation in January 2017 and found that current greenhouse gas emission standards for model years 2022-25 can be met using existing available vehicle technology, that the emission standards are feasible at reasonable cost, will achieve significant carbon dioxide emissions reductions, and will provide significant economic and environmental benefits to consumers. The EPA made a Final Determination to keep these standards in place.

Despite the earlier findings, in March 2017, the new EPA administration reversed course and announced that it planned to reconsider the previous decision. Following Tuesday's announcement that the EPA has completed its reconsideration and concluded that the standards should be weakened, the EPA and NHTSA are expected to begin notice and comment rulemaking to establish new greenhouse gas emission and CAFE standards.

Vermont is already experiencing harmful effects of climate change, this includes increasingly frequent severe storms with heavy rainfall and resulting flooding. Nationally, and in Vermont, the transportation sector is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions. Reducing light-duty vehicle greenhouse gas emissions is critical to achieving Vermont's statutory goal of achieving a 75% reduction from 1990 levels. The existing standards also spur the development of more fuel-efficient vehicles that will reduce consumers' fuel costs.

Attorney General Donovan has already expressed concerns about the EPA's standards rollback. [In a letter to EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt last June](#), Attorney General Donovan and 12 other state attorneys general offered "strong disagreement" with the legal basis offered to support the rollback and promised "to pursue appropriate legal action" to defend the standards if necessary. Last fall, Attorney General Donovan [joined 11 state attorneys general in the filing of comments](#) with the EPA and NHTSA opposing the planned rollback.

The State of Vermont intends to work with other states to vigorously defend the agreed upon standards and preserve the harmonized national program. If necessary, Vermont also intends to support the legal authority to adopt and implement its own standards.

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