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Defying Law and Science, Trump Administration Ends Vehicles Talks With California and Signals Major Standards Rollback

Statement by Michelle Robinson, Union of Concerned Scientists

WASHINGTON (February 20, 2019)—Reports today indicate that the Trump administration will end its talks with California over vehicle emissions and efficiency standards. This decision signals the administration’s determination to gut successful vehicle standards, setting up a legal battle and undermining climate progress and consumer benefits, according to the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS).

Below is a statement by Michelle Robinson, director of the Clean Vehicles Program at UCS.

“The Trump administration has made it clear that their insistence on weaker emissions and efficiency standards takes priority over everything else—including law, science and the public interest. Trump officials have been so determined to gut these standards that they never really negotiated with California in good faith in the first place.

“There’s no question that California has the authority to set its own vehicle standards and that states can choose to adopt those standards. In fact, the growing set of states that have chosen strong standards makes up a third of the U.S. auto market, and even if the Trump administration decides to abandon this common-sense policy, these states will keep their own strong standards in place and challenge the Trump administration’s attacks.

“These standards are working. Year after year, they’ve delivered improvements in efficiency for every size of passenger vehicle. They’ve saved drivers more than \$77 billion at the pump and they’re one of the most effective climate policies on the books. The Trump administration has ignored the facts—including the research of its own agency scientists—and premised its rollback on laughably bad arguments.

“Today, we have one national standard, carefully negotiated by states, automakers and federal agencies. By walking away from the negotiating table, the administration has endangered that national policy and all of the benefits it has delivered, ensuring a long court battle and uncertainty for America’s automakers in an increasingly emissions-conscious global market. The Trump administration only has itself to blame for the harm that results.”

The Union of Concerned Scientists puts rigorous, independent science to work to solve our planet's most pressing problems. Joining with people across the country, we combine technical analysis and effective advocacy to create innovative, practical solutions for a healthy, safe, and sustainable future.

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