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## Trump's new head of DOT rips up US fuel efficiency regulations

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Secretary Duffy claims polluting more will make cars cheaper.

JONATHAN M. GITLIN – JAN 29, 2025 9:11 AM |

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We can look forward to more air pollution and more climate change as a result of the Trump administration's policies. Credit: Getty Images



TEXT SETTINGS

US President Donald Trump's pick to run the Department of Transportation was sworn in to his new job yesterday. And as widely expected, Secretary Sean Duffy moved to immediately rip up the nation's fuel efficiency standards.

Duffy issued a memo soon after starting the job on Tuesday evening, ordering the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration "to commence an immediate review and reconsideration of all existing fuel economy standards applicable to all models of motor vehicles produced from model year 2022 forward," with particular attention to the tougher new regulations put in place last year by the Biden administration.

"The memorandum signed today specifically reduces the burdensome and overly restrictive fuel standards that have needlessly driven up the cost of a car in order to push a radical Green New Deal agenda. The American people should not be forced to sacrifice choice and affordability when purchasing a new car," Duffy said in a statement.

In his memo, Duffy repeats the Trump administration's messaging, claiming that making the nation's vehicles pollute more is necessary to "remove regulatory barriers to motor vehicle access" and that doing so will create "a level regulatory playing field for consumer choice."

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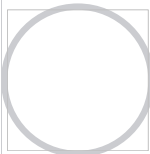
The memo also says that state waivers on vehicle pollution—such as California's legally enshrined right to regulate air quality within its border—should be terminated, as it "function[s] to limit sales of gasoline-powered vehicles." It also calls electric vehicle subsidies an "ill-conceived government-imposed market distortion" that is making cars unaffordable.

Duffy's attack on California's waiver was probably superfluous—his boss already issued an executive order doing just that upon being sworn in as president earlier this month.

The first Trump administration spent much time attacking fuel efficiency and California's waiver, moves that were slowly reversed during the Biden administration. Even so, under former President Biden, the US Environmental Protection Agency moved to soften the incoming Corporate Average Fuel Economy regs meant to go into effect between model years 2027–2032.

The updated regulations remained relatively strict but gave automakers more time to reach their targets and allowed for a greater mix of hybrid vehicles.

In a further attack on clean air and climate change mitigation, the acting administrator of the General Services Administration issued a memo late last week that barred the federal government from purchasing any zero-emissions vehicles. In 2021, former President Biden ordered that most federal vehicle acquisitions be zero-emissions vehicles by 2032.




**JONATHAN M. GITLIN**

*AUTOMOTIVE EDITOR*

Jonathan is the Automotive Editor at Ars Technica. He has a BSc and PhD in Pharmacology. In 2014 he decided to indulge his lifelong passion for the car by leaving the National Human Genome Research Institute and launching Ars Technica's automotive coverage. He lives in Washington, DC.

 **396 COMMENTS**

**STAFF PICKS**



**gothmog1114**

I for one am glad we elevated someone who was on MTV's Real World to head the US DoT. Can you imagine the chaos had we gone with someone from a different reality show, like the Apprentice?

January 29, 2025 at 2:51 pm

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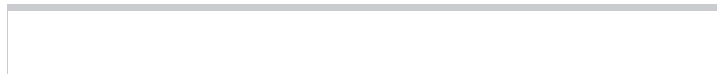
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