



COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY & COMMERCE
DEMOCRATS
RANKING MEMBER FRANK PALLONE, JR.

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Pallone Opening Remarks at CAFE Hearing

Washington, D.C. – *Energy and Commerce Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) delivered the following opening remarks today at a joint hearing of the Subcommittees on Digital Commerce and Consumer Protection and Environment titled, “Update on the Corporate Average Fuel Economy Program (CAFE) and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Standards for Motor Vehicles.”*

Good morning. A little over a year ago, the Committee held a hearing on the Technical Assessment Report (TAR) produced by the National Highway Transportation and Safety Administration (NHTSA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the California Air Resources Board (CARB). The report formed the basis for all three agencies' decision in January to move forward with their proposed light duty vehicle standards for models produced between 2022 and 2025.

Unfortunately, as with many other decisions and regulations needed to improve public health, the environment, and consumer benefits, the Trump Administration is moving to weaken these important standards. The Administration complied with a request from the auto industry to re-open the midterm review and reconsider the current greenhouse gas emission target for light duty vehicles equivalent to 51.4 miles per gallon by model year 2025. This review could potentially lead to a weakening of the standard.

I believe that if the U.S. auto industry is to remain competitive in the global market we must reject efforts to move backwards. These targets are critical to reducing greenhouse gas emissions that contribute greatly to the ongoing threat of climate change. And, we must meet these goals to reduce harmful emissions that endanger public health.

Air pollution and carbon emissions from the transportation sector are significant in many of the world's urban areas. The fastest growing markets for automobiles are in Asia, especially in India and China. These are the same countries whose large cities experience chronic poor air quality that create significant public health problems. Understandably, several countries, including Britain, France, India, and China, this year announced ambitious goals to restrict or eliminate sales of new gas and diesel cars within the next few decades.

The auto industry claims that it cannot meet stricter fuel efficiency and emission reduction goals by 2025. But their efforts to seek harmonization through credits and so-called credit banking will only serve to undermine and erode the laudable goals previously set by the Obama Administration.

Meanwhile, the auto industry has already received a sizable advantage from the Trump Administration—an indefinite delay of the civil penalty increases for CAFE violations that were finalized at the end of last year.

Industry must find ways to continue their investment in vehicles that are more fuel efficient, particularly those that don't rely on fossil fuel for power. The joint standards developed by NHTSA and EPA in conjunction with the state of California are ambitious, but clearly achievable. They will deliver tremendous benefits to consumers and make our nation more energy secure. They will also play a critical role in our effort to slow the pace and severity of climate change. And, lowering emissions will improve air quality and public health.

We know that technologies to produce more efficient and less polluting vehicles are available and affordable today. Those vehicles must be produced, and they must be marketed with at least the same level of resources used to market the large, inefficient sport utility vehicles currently being pushed by industry. There is simply no justification for easing up on this important effort that will benefit public health, the environment, and American manufacturers, who will reap the benefits of our nation being out in front, instead of being dragged behind.

Thank you, I yield back.

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