

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Corporate Average Fuel Economy Standards (“CAFE”) for Passenger Cars and Light Trucks for Model Years 2022-2031 (SAFE Vehicle Rule III)

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As prepared for delivery

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Diana Van Vleet and I am a National Director of Clean Air Advocacy for the American Lung Association. I am also a mom of two young boys.

In order to protect children’s health against the harms of transportation pollution, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) must retain the strongest possible fuel economy standards.

I support strong fuel efficiency standards because the health of my sons is my priority. The less transportation pollution that my children - and all children - breathe, the better.

My almost 3-year-old son is obsessed with cars. His first word, after mama and dada, was car. He absolutely loves everything about cars and trucks and vehicles. I haven’t explained the concept of pollution from cars to him yet, but I rested easier knowing that our country was trending toward cleaner, less polluting cars. Until recently.

The already-finalized CAFE standards that this proposal would weaken would significantly reduce dangerous pollution from cars – including smog-forming nitrogen oxides and cancer-causing particle pollution from medium- and heavier-truck classes. NHTSA projected that the emission reductions resulting from these standards would save hundreds of lives while making vehicles more affordable to operate. Why don’t we want healthier, more affordable vehicles again?

Digging in a little deeper on the health risks for kids: Children face special risks from air pollution, including traffic pollution, because their airways are small and still developing, and because they breathe more rapidly and inhale more air relative to their size than do adults. In addition, the body’s defenses that help adults fight off infections are still developing in children. Kids are also more likely to spend time being active outdoors, which can increase their exposure to traffic pollution. Growing up breathing high levels of air pollution can affect how children’s lungs develop, putting them at greater risk of lung disease as they age. Exposure to traffic pollution is known to contribute to asthma attacks, asthma onset in children, and increased risk of respiratory infection in children, among other risks.

This proposed rollback admits that the action would result in over 450 premature deaths, nearly 14,000 asthma exacerbations, and other pollution-related health emergencies - just between the years 2024 - 2050. This rollback will lead to more kids having asthma attacks and needing to go to the hospital. Period.

The good news is that we already have strong standards finalized that will deliver meaningful health and air quality benefits through achievable efficiency improvements. Please don’t gut these standards needlessly.

On behalf of my sons and children across America, I urge NHTSA to drop this proposal.