Testimony re: The Safer Affordable Fuel-Efficient (SAFE) Vehicles Rule III for Model Years 2022 to 2031 Passenger Cars and Light Trucks

Andy Su on behalf of Environmental Defense Fund
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Hearing
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Hello, my name is Andy Su. I am testifying on behalf of Environmental Defense Fund and our millions of members in strong opposition to NHTSA's proposal to weaken our nation's fuel economy standards that are vital to national security, public health and American consumers.

NHTSA is required by law to improve fuel economy by setting standards that are the maximum feasible. This proposal does not meet NHTSA's statutory requirements and would thwart the energy-conservation mandate required by Congress.

CAFE standards have improved gas mileage for millions of vehicles since 1975 – and those more fuel-efficient vehicles have saved billions of dollars for American drivers and American businesses. And at the same time we have reduced our gas use, our vehicles have become more efficient, more powerful and safer. This proposal that will substantially weaken fuel economy standards would mean wasted gas, more pollution, and higher costs for families *already* facing high, and rising, fuel costs.

Fuel economy standards save gas, money, and improve our nation's energy security. The updated CAFE standards that NHTSA adopted in 2024 are no exception. Owners of cars and passenger trucks would save more than $600 on gas over the lifetime of their vehicles. Meaningful standards also improve our nation's security by reducing oil use. In the 2024 rulemaking NHTSA estimated the standards would avoid almost 70 billion gallons of gasoline by 2050, a total economic savings of $23 billion. These standards require improvements in fuel economy using readily available technologies that would make a significant difference to drivers. In fact, many of today's vehicle models already meet the standards for 2031. The proposal would allow manufacturers to make vehicles far less efficient than today's models.

This proposal would join numerous other actions the Administration has taken to substantially increase costs and pollution. The Administration's proposal to repeal the Greenhouse Gas Endangerment Finding and all vehicle greenhouse gas standards would increase costs for Americans. The Administration has also eliminated clean vehicle tax credits, a move that will increase prices and limit consumers choices. At the same time, electricity bills have spiked and insurance premiums are rising – doubling in some places.

Making vehicles less efficient and forcing Americans to spend more hard-earned money on gas would only add to these damaging actions and the already-considerable costs Americans are facing.
NHTSA should abandon this harmful and misguided proposal that will increase costs for Americans and be disastrous for our economy, national security, and environment.