



For Immediate Release:

April 9, 2018

Contact:

Megan Ahearn, mahearn@nypirg.org

Eric Wood, ewood@nypirg.org

**NYPIRG Counts Down Ten Steps New York Must Take To Be A Green Leader By Earth Day
Step 1: Thwart EPA Standards Attack by Banning Fossil-Fuel Powered Cars**

(NY) – From now until Earth Day, NYPIRG is counting down ten steps that New York must take to be a national environmental leader. With climate deniers firmly in control of national policies, it will be up to the states to act.

In recent years, New York has unveiled ambitious environmental programs and actions. But, announcements must be backed up by achievements. Step one for New York to go green for Earth Day is to set a plan to ban the sale of new fossil-fuel powered cars. For more information, see our policy paper at www.nypirg.org/FFCarBan.

Last week, the Trump Administration moved to roll back the nation's auto emission and fuel economy standards. The current regulations are aimed at cutting tailpipe emissions of carbon dioxide, a major contributor to global warming. The Trump Administration also demanded that California, which has its own state-based, more stringent auto emission standards, must follow the federal decision or face legal challenge.

The proposed federal rollback would increase greenhouse gas emissions, and allow higher levels of particulate pollutants to be emitted by cars – which are a health hazard, particularly with regard to asthma.

California's authority to regulate auto emissions has been supported by the courts and has allowed 13 other states, including New York, to follow California's standards. California, New York, Massachusetts and the other states following the stricter standards comprise more than a third of the national car market. If fully implemented, the current federal rules would cut carbon dioxide pollution by about six billion tons, according to the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Whether the federal proposal will eventually trigger a legal battle with California is unclear and there have been media reports of negotiations between federal and state regulators. But let's hope that California does not buckle under the pressure.

It seems that California not only plans to dramatically increase the number of electric cars on the road, but to also prohibit the sale of fossil fuel powered cars. Last fall, the head of California's Air Resources Board, suggested the state could move to set a date within the next decade to require the sale of only 100% new electric cars or those running on other renewable energy.

If California acts, New York should follow suit. New York Attorney General Schneiderman has already promised legal action if the Trump Administration moves forward on its rollback plan. New York must pledge to both defend California's legal authority to protect the environment and, working with California, it should set a target date to move the state toward banning the sale of fossil fuels cars.

In concert, these two states should act now to set a clear environmental policy goal that illustrates just how far the Trump Administration is putting the public's – and planet's – health at risk and to show what leadership looks like in the face of a rapidly heating planet.

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