

Testimony of Luke Tonachel, Director of the Clean Vehicles and Fuels Project at the Natural Resources Defense Council before the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency at the Public Hearing for The Safer Affordable Fuel-Efficient (SAFE) Vehicles Rule for Model Years 2021–2026 Passenger Cars and Light Trucks

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Dearborn, Michigan

As Prepared for Delivery

Good morning and thank you for holding this hearing. My name is Luke Tonachel and I am the Director of the Clean Vehicles and Fuels Group at the Natural Resources Defense Council, or NRDC. I'm here today on behalf of NRDC's more than 3 million members and online activists who support our efforts to safeguard all Americans' right to clean air, clean water and a healthy planet.

NRDC strongly opposes the proposed rollback in the existing vehicle standards because it is very harmful.

The proposal is harmful because it will increase pollution and oil consumption relative to the existing 2025 standards. The proposal will stop future progress just at the time that we should be accelerating efforts to reduce pollution from transportation, which is the nation's top emitter. Americans' health will suffer under the proposal as global warming fueled by our car and truck emissions will lead to more extreme weather days that produce smog and particulate matter that cause asthma and premature deaths.

The agencies' proposal is also harmful because it will unnecessarily force consumers to shell out more money at the pump. This is a straight up give-away to the oil industry. An additional 73 billion gallons of gasoline will be consumed by the vehicles directly regulated under the proposal. At least another \$170 billion dollars will go from hard-working Americans' pockets to Big Oil.

American jobs will be harmed too. It's ironic that we are faced with a federal proposal to freeze on-going progress on clean and fuel-efficient vehicle technology at a hearing in

Michigan, a state that rightfully prides itself on being a center of gravity for automotive innovation. NHTSA and EPA's own analysis shows that 60,000 automotive sector jobs will be lost as a result of this rollback. The number is certainly much higher. The agencies ignore the hundreds of thousands of jobs that would be created under the existing standards from fuel-saving innovations that put money in consumers' wallets and then gets pumped into Michigan and other state and local economies.

When faced with the harms that this proposal will cause, it's only natural to ask how it could be justified. The simple answer is that it can't. The proposal relies on faulty assumptions that lead to erroneously inflated costs and bogus safety claims. It defies years of research demonstrating that the existing standards are technically and economically achievable. They should be kept in place.

In conclusion, on behalf of NRDC, I urge you to rescind this dangerous proposal. We Americans pay taxes so that the government will serve and protect *us*, not Big Oil.

Thank you for your attention.