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Air District Chair Denounces EPA's Implementation of New Higher-Pollution Car Standards

Statement from Eric Guerra, Chair of the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District:

Today, the Trump administration's Safer Affordable Fuel Efficient Vehicle (SAFE) Rule Part 2 goes into effect. Since September 2019, the Sac Metro Air District has taken a firm stand opposing both parts of the SAFE Rule.

First, we joined forces with other air agencies and clean air advocates to challenge the Federal Administration's attempt to strip California of its longstanding authority to adopt motor vehicle emission standards necessary to protect the health of our residents. Then, we challenged the Trump Administration's decision to allow drastic increases in greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants. The most recent legal action the Air District took was joining 20 states, the District of Columbia, the South Coast AQMD and the Bay Area AQMD in filing a motion to intervene and defend the nation's vehicle standards against a challenge by the automaker's Competitive Enterprise Institute (CEI). This action puts us in a position to counter any arguments that the Administration should have adopted even weaker greenhouse gas emission and fuel economy standards.

I am disappointed that we've reached the point where these relaxed regulations are going into effect. I am very concerned about how these actions will affect the health of our residents in Sacramento and the entire state by severely impeding progress in reducing emissions from motor vehicles, one of the largest sources of air and climate pollution.

The ability for California to set our own emission standards, which was authorized under the original federal Clean Air Act in 1967, has dramatically improved our air quality despite a rising population. The revocation of the "waiver" is a huge setback in our region's ability to fight the unique challenges we face in combatting air pollution and climate change from vehicles and other fossil fuel combustion. In sum, the federal administration's actions, if allowed to stand, will erode the substantial air quality successes we have made, slow future progress, and jeopardize the health of our residents.

At a time when COVID-19 is targeting those with respiratory challenges the most, this is an irresponsible act in protecting public health. The Air District will continue to stand up against these arbitrary, irrational and irresponsible changes made by the Trump administration and we will work with our partners, other air agencies and our delegations to reverse this entire rule.