

Environment & Energy

Fuel Standards Defended by Group of State Attorneys General

By Zach Bright

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- Motion submitted defending light vehicle standards
 - Texas, other attorneys general challenged standards
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State attorneys general from California and 18 other states submitted a motion to defend federal fuel economy standards for light-duty vehicles from a challenge by top state legal officials in Texas and other states.

The motion, filed Monday, intervenes in defense of fuel economy standards recently set by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The rules help lower greenhouse gas emissions, improve air quality and public health, and save Americans an estimated 60 billion gallons of gasoline and \$98 billion, California Attorney General Rob Bonta said in a statement.

“The skyrocketing gas prices over the past few months are case in point for why more stringent fuel economy standards are necessary,” Bonta (D) said. “The technology is there, and the law is clear.”

The standards, put in place earlier this year, require passenger cars and light trucks in model year 2026 to average 49 miles per gallon of gas.

Texas’s attorney general, along with top attorneys from 10 other states, challenged the standards in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit earlier this summer.

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton (R) had said the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration “violated the express statutory prohibition on its mandating electric vehicles” when it set the new corporate average fuel economy standards.

NHTSA is required to set standards to reduce vehicle energy consumption under the Energy Policy Conservation Act. Before NHTSA’s new standards for model year 2024-2026 vehicles to increase fuel efficiency by 8 % to 10% annually, the Trump administration weakened fuel economy standards.

The case is Texas v. Nat’l. Highway Safety Admin., D.C. Cir. App., No. 22-01080, motion to intervene 8/1/22.

To contact the reporter on this story: Zach Bright at zbright@bloombergindustry.com

To contact the editor responsible for this story: Renee Schoof at rschoof@bloombergindustry.com

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