

As Black church leaders, we are called to protect God's creation and care for God's people, particularly those who are marginalized and suffering. It with this calling in mind that we urge the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to reverse course on its efforts to weaken strong fuel economy on vehicles.

The proposed weakening of fuel economy standards for cars and trucks will not only impact community health but also the health of God's creation by increasing vehicle pollution. According to the American Lung Society, more than 26 million people of color, including African Americans, live in counties that have poor air quality, with vehicle pollution a major contributor. Vehicle pollution is a leading source of greenhouse gases and harmful smog-forming pollutants.

It is no surprise that Black communities are disproportionately impacted by asthma and other respiratory illnesses. Our communities have traditionally borne an undue burden from pollution since our neighborhoods are often located closest to highways and other sources of vehicle pollution. Strong fuel economy standards will help address these unequal health impacts.

In addition to adverse health impacts, the proposed rollback of fuel economy standards will negatively impact household budgets. Transportation is the second largest household expenditure and strong fuel economy standards have saved consumers money at the pump. At a time when many families are struggling to make ends meet, this rule will increase the amount of money that households will spend on transportation.

Addressing pollution and ensuring that households are not overburdened from transportation costs is a matter of morality and justice. The Department of Transportation and the NHTSA have an opportunity to help address these injustices of pollution by abandoning efforts to weaken fuel economy standards.

Sincerely,