



July 6, 2026

Lee Zeldin, Administrator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
EPA Docket Center  
Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2025-3297  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20460

Re: Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2025-3297, *Revision of Tier 4 Criteria Pollutant Standards, Part 1: Amendments to Phase-In Schedule for Light-Duty and Medium-Duty Vehicles*

Dear Administrator Zeldin:

The Northeast States for Coordinated Air Use Management (NESCAUM) and the Ozone Transport Commission (OTC) respectfully submit these comments on the Proposed Rule titled *Revision of Tier 4 Criteria Pollutant Standards, Part 1: Amendments to Phase-In Schedule for Light-Duty and Medium-Duty Vehicles*, 91 Fed. Reg. 28463 (May 18, 2026), issued by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the above-referenced docket.<sup>1</sup>

NESCAUM is the non-profit regional association of state air quality agencies in the Northeast states.<sup>2</sup> NESCAUM's member agencies have the primary responsibility in their states for implementing programs that achieve the public health and environmental protection goals of the federal Clean Air Act (CAA) and state climate laws. For more than three decades, NESCAUM and its members have collaborated closely with other states, federal agencies, industry, and a wide range of stakeholders to reduce tailpipe pollution from cars and trucks.

Congress created the OTC in CAA §184(a) to advise EPA on ozone transport issues and to address persistent ground-level ozone problems in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions.<sup>3</sup> The OTC includes the air quality agencies in these regions and is responsible for developing and implementing initiatives to reduce nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs), the precursor air pollutants that contribute to the formation of ground-level ozone pollution.

As described in the comments below, NESCAUM and the OTC strongly oppose EPA's proposal to extend the Tier 3 emissions standards for new motor vehicles to model years 2027 and 2028 instead of implementing the Tier 4 standards scheduled to come into effect in model year 2027. Delaying the implementation of technologically feasible standards will increase emissions of

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<sup>1</sup> This proposal is available at: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2026-05-18/pdf/2026-09905.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> The NESCAUM states are Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

<sup>3</sup> The OTC jurisdictions are Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Virginia. NESCAUM is under contract to the OTC to manage its activities.

NO<sub>x</sub>, fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>), VOCs, and air toxics, and make it even more difficult for states across the country to protect public health and attain the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ozone.

## I. Background

Ozone exposure can irritate the respiratory system, reduce lung function, aggravate asthma, damage lung lining, permanently scar lung tissue, and increase the risk of premature death from lung or heart disease. Unsafe ozone levels pose a greater risk to children because their lungs are still developing, and they face higher exposure from spending more time being active and playing sports outdoors; additionally, children breathe faster than adults, causing them to inhale more pollutants relative to their body weight. The elderly are also at increased risk due to age-related changes that decrease their ability to cope with ozone exposure, leading to worsening respiratory and cardiovascular health and reduced cognitive abilities.

As required by the CAA, EPA sets national standards for ground-level ozone and other pollutants, like NO<sub>x</sub> and particulate matter, to protect public health and welfare. The CAA is a critical demonstration of cooperative federalism – that is, a partnership between the states and the federal government to make forward, feasible progress toward reducing harmful air pollution. While NESCAUM and the OTC have worked for decades to reduce regional emissions of ozone precursors to attain federal health-based air quality standards, states must rely on EPA to adequately control federal sources of air pollution, including upwind stationary sources and mobile sources, that are either beyond states' jurisdictional control or that states are otherwise preempted from regulating.

EPA's misguided deregulatory agenda<sup>4</sup> undermines the principles of cooperative federalism that have underpinned the significant achievements in clean air and public health in the United States since the adoption of the 1990 CAA Amendments. Unlike emissions from stationary sources, mobile source emissions are largely under federal control because states are preempted from establishing emission standards for new vehicles and engines. One notable exception, authorized under the CAA and utilized by many states, is the right to adopt and enforce emission standards for new cars and trucks that are identical to California's standards for which an EPA waiver is granted.<sup>5</sup> Nonetheless, EPA is intent on rolling back the health and environmental protections afforded by robust emission standards for new vehicles. First, even though California's standards are shown to be a cost-effective measure to reduce ozone-forming pollution, EPA illegally submitted waivers to Congress under the Congressional Review Act to rescind the waivers for the most recent set of California emissions standards for cars and trucks.<sup>6</sup> Second, EPA's

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<sup>4</sup> U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, EPA Launches Biggest Deregulatory Action in U.S. History (March 12, 2025), <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-launches-biggest-deregulatory-action-us-history>.

<sup>5</sup> California Air Resources Board, States that have adopted California's Vehicle Regulations, updated April 2026, <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/states-have-adopted-californias-vehicle-regulations>.

<sup>6</sup> See U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, EPA Administrator Zeldin Celebrates President Trump Officially Ending California's Vehicle Waivers, Delivering Another Major Blow to the EV Mandate (June 12, 2025), <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-administrator-zeldin-celebrates-president-trump-officially-ending-californias>. See also NESCAUM, Statement on Inappropriate Use of Congressional Review Act on Clean Air Act Waivers (May

dismantling of federal emission standards for light- and medium-duty vehicles is weakening the federal regulatory backstop for air quality across the nation. The impact of these combined actions is a stunning repudiation of EPA's obligations under the CAA.

## II. The significance of motor vehicle pollution and its impact on nonattainment

In the region covered by the NESCAUM and OTC states, the mobile source sector – including cars, trucks, ships, trains, planes, and other offroad vehicles and equipment used on lawns, gardens, farms, and construction sites – is the greatest contributor to ground-level ozone. While stationary sources of ozone precursor emissions that contribute to interstate air pollution in violation of the CAA's "Good Neighbor" provisions must continue to be addressed, it is not possible for areas in the Ozone Transport Region (OTR) and NESCAUM region to meet national health-based ozone air quality standards without deep pollution reductions from the mobile source sector.

Despite dramatic reductions in ozone pollution in the OTR, the New York City (NYC) metropolitan area fails to comply with both the 2008 and 2015 NAAQS for ozone. This affects over 22 million people living in the NYC Combined Statistical Area (CSA),<sup>7</sup> including northern New Jersey and over 55 percent of the population of Connecticut,<sup>8</sup> along with roughly 65 million people visiting this area each year.<sup>9</sup> The chronically persistent high ozone concentrations compromise the health and welfare of the citizens living in the NYC CSA and other parts of the Northeast Corridor. While ozone is largely a summertime issue, NOx emissions are a year-round problem. NOx emissions contribute to acid deposition, eutrophication, and visibility impairment in the NESCAUM and OTC regions. During colder seasons, NOx emissions contribute to the formation of secondary PM<sub>2.5</sub> through the formation of nitrates.

The "Multipollutant Emissions Standards for Model Years 2027 and Later Light- and Medium-Duty Vehicles,"<sup>10</sup> which include the Tier 4 standards, promise to deliver significant public health benefits, including over 94,000 tons/year of NOx emissions reduction and 194,000 tons/year of

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22, 2025), <https://www.nescaum.org/documents/statement-on-inappropriate-use-of-congressional-review-act-on-clean-air-act-waivers.fol>.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-year estimates, retrieved from Census Reporter Profile page for New York-Newark, NY-NJ-CT-PA CSA (2024), <http://censusreporter.org/profiles/33000US408-new-york-newark-ny-nj-ct-pa-csa/>.

<sup>8</sup> In Connecticut, the combined populations of the three counties in the severe nonattainment area – Fairfield, Middlesex, and New Haven – account for more than half of the state's total population. Office of the Secretary of State, Population of Connecticut by Counties (visited on June 18, 2026), <https://portal.ct.gov/SOTS/Register-Manual/Section-VII/Population-of-Connecticut-by-Counties>.

<sup>9</sup> In 2024, nearly 65 million people visited New York City alone. Office of the Mayor, Mayor Adams Celebrates Nearly 65 Million Visitors to NYC in 2024, Second Highest Number of Visitors in City History (Dec. 20, 2024) <https://www.nyc.gov/mayors-office/news/2024/12/mayor-adams-celebrates-nearly-65-million-visitors-nyc-2024-second-highest-number-visitors>.

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Multi-Pollutant Emissions Standards for Model Years 2027 and Later Light- Duty and Medium-Duty Vehicles; 89 Fed. Reg. 27842 (April 18, 2024).

VOC emissions reduction nationwide by 2055.<sup>11</sup> A conservative estimate based on new vehicle registrations is that 22 percent of those emissions reductions will occur in the OTR.<sup>12</sup> Relatedly, EPA estimated that \$13 billion of annualized benefits, such as reduced premature death and hospital admissions due to respiratory and cardiovascular illnesses, would be attributable to reduced emissions of criteria pollutants that contribute to ambient concentrations of PM<sub>2.5</sub>.<sup>13</sup> Losing the emissions benefits of the Tier 4 standards would be equivalent to adding millions more passenger cars or tens of thousands more heavy-duty trucks to our roads.

### III. EPA's proposal fails to monetize the impacts of emissions increases

The Tier 4 standards are vital to improving public health outcomes across the nation, especially for people living or working near transportation corridors who are exposed to higher levels of motor vehicle pollution. Environmental and public health costs should be of the utmost priority in EPA's consideration of its proposal to delay and ultimately revise the Tier 4 program. Nevertheless, EPA disregards its clear duty to assess the air quality impacts and model the disbenefits of its proposed delay. The piecemeal approach EPA is using to eviscerate emissions standards for light- and medium-duty vehicles makes it difficult to understand and assess the real and overall impacts EPA's action will have on the environment and public health and welfare.

EPA's proposal will have far-reaching impacts on public health and welfare that extend well beyond the two model years that are directly affected by Part 1. By communicating EPA's intent to reconsider the entire Tier 4 program, Part 1 effectively discourages future investments in clean vehicle technologies and gives manufacturers the green light to change production plans accordingly. No doubt, any announcements made by manufacturers along these lines will then be used by EPA to justify the need for weaker standards and additional lead time in Part 2 of its proposal. Therefore, EPA must consider, model, and monetize the impact of not only erasing the emissions benefits of the Tier 4 standards for model years 2027 and 2028 but also the longer-term impacts of EPA's proposal.

EPA cites a concern about epidemiological, economic, and methodological uncertainties as the reason for not monetizing health benefits from reductions in ozone and PM<sub>2.5</sub> exposures. There is some degree of uncertainty in all elements of a benefit-cost analysis, including the calculation of compliance costs. Reviews of CAA regulations have found that analyses conducted prior to rulemakings consistently overestimated compliance costs due to factors that are difficult to forecast in advance, including technological innovation and fuel costs.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, it is well-

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<sup>11</sup> U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Multi-Pollutant Standards for Light-Duty and Medium-Duty Vehicles, Regulatory Impact Analysis, Table 7-11 (March 2024), <https://nepis.epa.gov/Exe/ZyPDF.cgi?Dockey=P1019VPM.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> National Automobile Dealers Association, NADA Data 2025 (2026), <https://www.nada.org/nada/research-data/nada-data>.

<sup>13</sup> U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Fact Sheet: Multi-Pollutant Emissions Standards for Model Years 2027 and Later Light-Duty and Medium-Duty Vehicles (March 2024), <https://nepis.epa.gov/Exe/ZyPDF.cgi?Dockey=P1019VP5.pdf>.

<sup>14</sup> Dallas Burtraw, "Trading Emissions to Clean the Air: Exchanges Few but Savings Many." Resources for the Future, Winter No. 122 (1996). R. David Simpson, Do regulators overestimate the cost of regulation?, *Journal of Benefit Cost Analysis*, pages 315-332 (June 2014).

established that policy itself is what induces technological progress that translates to cleaner, lower-emitting vehicles and energy-saving consumer products being available in the marketplace.<sup>15</sup>

Health benefits that are not monetized are effectively weighted as zero, and while there is an uncertainty range in monetized health benefits from reduced exposure to PM<sub>2.5</sub> and ozone, there is great confidence that the full range of those monetized benefits are positive and not zero. For these reasons, we urge EPA to monetize PM<sub>2.5</sub> and ozone health benefits as in past benefit-cost analyses conducted during the development of CAA regulations. The basis for monetizing those benefits is well-established by robust social science that has been thoroughly peer-reviewed and its use in benefit-cost analyses is widely accepted as good economic practice.<sup>16</sup> Any uncertainties are within reason for use in rulemakings and doing so is vastly preferable to discontinuing quantification of health benefits altogether, which would create the false assumption that benefits are zero.

#### IV. Tier 4 standards are technologically feasible

EPA's proposal to extend the Tier 3 standards for two model years is unfounded and entirely unnecessary because the Tier 4 standards are technologically feasible, especially for model years 2027 and 2028. For non-methane organic gases (NMOG)+NO<sub>x</sub>, the Tier 4 standards are fleet-average performance-based standards that are phased in over several years. For instance, the standards for light-duty vehicles start with a fleet average level of 25 milligrams per mile (mg/mi) in model year 2027 and phase down to 15 mg/mi by model year 2032, representing a 50 percent reduction from the Tier 3 standards of 30 mg/mi in place for model years 2025 and 2026. For PM, the Tier 4 standards establish a per-vehicle cap of 0.5 mg/mi that starts with 20 percent in model year 2027 and increases to 100 percent in model year 2030 for light-duty vehicles and in model year 2031 for medium-duty vehicles. The program also includes averaging, banking, and trading (ABT) provisions to provide additional flexibilities for automakers.

The performance-based fleet average standards in Tier 4 offer a wide array of compliance pathways and do not mandate the use of any particular technology. Indeed, individual manufacturers can choose to apply a mix of technologies, including various levels of base and advanced internal combustion engine (ICE), hybrid electric vehicle (HEV), plug-in hybrid electric vehicle (PHEV), and battery electric vehicle (BEV) technologies to different vehicles and at different times. Moreover, these technologies are in-use and widely available today. In

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<sup>15</sup> Christopher R. Knittel, *Automobiles on steroids: product attribute trade-offs and technological progress in the automobile sector*, *American Economic Review* 101(7), pages 3368-3399 (2011); See also: Takahiko Kiso, "Environmental Policy and Induced Technological Change: Evidence from Automobile Fuel Economy Regulations," *Environmental and Resource Economics* 74, pages 785-810 (2019).

<sup>16</sup> U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, *Guidelines for Preparing Economic Analyses* (3rd edition). Report number EPA-240-R-24-001. Washington, DC (2024), [https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2024-12/guidelines-for-preparing-economic-analyses\\_final\\_508-compliant\\_compressed.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2024-12/guidelines-for-preparing-economic-analyses_final_508-compliant_compressed.pdf); Bryan Hubbell and Alan Krupnik, "How the US Environmental Protection Agency Got It Wrong About Monetizing Benefits of Air Pollution", *Resources for the Future* (January 2026), [https://media.rff.org/documents/Report\\_26-04.pdf](https://media.rff.org/documents/Report_26-04.pdf); See also OECD, *Mortality Risk Valuation in Policy Assessment: A Global Meta-Analysis of Value of Statistical Life Studies* (October 2025), <https://doi.org/10.1787/76ca89a2-en>.

April 2024, when finalizing the Tier 4 standards, EPA observed that many vehicles were already “demonstrating emissions performances at one-third to one half of the Tier 3 NMOG+NO<sub>x</sub>, final fleet average of 30 mg/mile through optimized engine and aftertreatment design and controls.”<sup>17</sup> A recent analysis by Manufacturers of Emission Controls Association (MECA) found that there are more than 212 model year 2026 vehicles with certification levels under 15 mg/mi (the final Tier 4 standard for model year 2032), and 83 vehicle models reporting values below 10 mg/mi.<sup>18</sup> This is in addition to the increasing number of BEV models on the market. The technologies needed to comply with the PM standards are also fully developed and widely in use around the world. According to MECA, for model year 2026, there are 96 gasoline models with gasoline particulate filters (GPFs), and there are already 36 additional gasoline models with GPFs certified for model year 2027.<sup>19</sup> Once again, this does not include BEVs.

EPA’s proposal to extend the Tier 3 standards presents no concrete evidence that industry as a whole, or even individual fleets, cannot comply with the Tier 4 standards in model years 2027 and 2028. As discussed above, there are numerous available technologies that are widely in use today that can be used to comply with the standards. In addition, ABT provisions afford manufacturers with additional flexibility to smooth compliance, for example, during vehicle redesign cycles or market fluctuations.<sup>20</sup> In an attempt to justify its Part 1 proposal, EPA points to significant changes in BEV projections since the promulgation of the Tier 4 standards.<sup>21</sup> However, as EPA explained in the final rule: “[T]he overall industry does not necessarily need to reach this level of PEVs, or this particular percentage of BEVs and PHEVs, in order to comply – the projection in our analysis is one of many possible compliance pathways that manufacturers could choose to take under the performance-based standards.”<sup>22</sup> Moreover, as recognized by EPA’s Part 1 proposal, “a year to 18 months would be necessary to adjust production plans.”<sup>23</sup> Thus, production plans for model year 2027, which has already started, and the upcoming model year 2028 are already locked in at this point and unlikely to change.

## V. EPA’s piecemeal approach creates regulatory uncertainty

EPA’s fragmented approach to dismantling federal emissions standards for light- and medium-duty vehicles ignores its responsibility to provide regulatory certainty needed to drive technological innovations that will improve air quality and public health outcomes across the nation. First, EPA repealed the GHG standards and declared that the criteria pollutant standards were outside the scope of that action. Now, EPA is proposing to revise the Tier 4 criteria pollutant standards in two separate rulemakings. In Part 1, the current rulemaking, EPA is

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<sup>17</sup> 89 Fed. Reg. at 28086.

<sup>18</sup> MECA, MECA Oral Testimony at the US EPA Public Hearing on the “Revision of Tier 4 Criteria Pollutant Standards, Part 1: Amendments to Phase-In Schedule for Light-Duty and Medium-Duty Vehicles Notice of Proposed Rulemaking” Docket No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2025–3297 (June 3, 2026), [https://www.meca.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/MECA\\_Oral\\_Comments\\_EPA\\_Tier4\\_Delay\\_Hearing\\_0603267.pdf](https://www.meca.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/MECA_Oral_Comments_EPA_Tier4_Delay_Hearing_0603267.pdf).

<sup>19</sup> *Id.*

<sup>20</sup> 89 Fed. Reg. at 27901.

<sup>21</sup> 91 Fed. Reg. at 28470.

<sup>22</sup> 89 Fed. Reg. at 28087.

<sup>23</sup> 91 Fed. Reg. at 28467.

proposing to extend the Tier 3 standards to model years 2027 and 2028. In Part 2, a future rulemaking, EPA will “comprehensively reconsider” the entire Tier 4 program. Consequently, automakers are being whipsawed by EPA’s deregulatory agenda as it creates potential legal liabilities and significant regulatory uncertainty, while forcing them to rethink future research and development, production, and compliance plans in a piecemeal way.

To minimize further disruption to industry and maximize public health outcomes, EPA should keep the Tier 4 standards in place for model years 2027 and 2028, while the agency considers what, if any, modifications are needed to course correct or evolve the program for later model years. The CAA requires EPA to set emission standards for motor vehicles that are protective of public health and to give the regulated community an appropriate amount of time to develop and implement the technology necessary to meet the emission standards.<sup>24</sup> This is precisely what EPA did in promulgating the Tier 4 standards, and the regulated community has already responded by designing, building, and selling vehicles that meet the requirements of the rule. Regulations can and should adapt to technological advancements and market dynamics but should do so in a way that provides regulatory certainty. Major changes to a regulatory program should not be sudden, opaque, or disruptive. Rather, adjustments should be transparent course corrections or natural evolutions of the regulatory program. Recent modifications to the CO<sub>2</sub> standards in Europe are a good example of policy adjustments that provide additional flexibilities while keeping the regulatory framework intact.<sup>25</sup>

## VI. Federal policies are undermining the EV market

The U.S. electric vehicle (EV) market is recalibrating in response to a whirlwind of federal actions designed to discourage the production and purchase of EVs. In January 2025, President Trump signed an executive order titled “Unleashing American Energy” making it the policy of the federal government to eliminate federal support and mandates for EVs.<sup>26</sup> Since then, the U.S. EV market has been weathering many storms, such as the unlawful actions under the Congressional Review Act to rescind EPA’s waivers for some of California’s emissions standards, the termination of federal tax credits for new and used EV purchases, the elimination of financial penalties for non-compliance with fuel economy standards, the repeal of GHG emissions standards, and the announcement in December 2025 of EPA’s plans to scrap the Tier 4 program.<sup>27</sup>

In response to the federal government’s anti-EV agenda, automobile manufacturers are seizing the opportunity to scale back EV investments and production in the United States and are instead refocusing on higher polluting vehicles with larger profit margins. In the short term, this is a net

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<sup>24</sup> 42 U.S.C. 7521(a)(1)-(2).

<sup>25</sup> European Commission, Press Release: Commission Takes Action for Clean and Competitive Automotive Sector (Dec. 15, 2025), [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_25\\_3051](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_25_3051).

<sup>26</sup> The White House, Executive Order, Unleashing American Energy (Jan. 20, 2025), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/unleashing-american-energy/>.

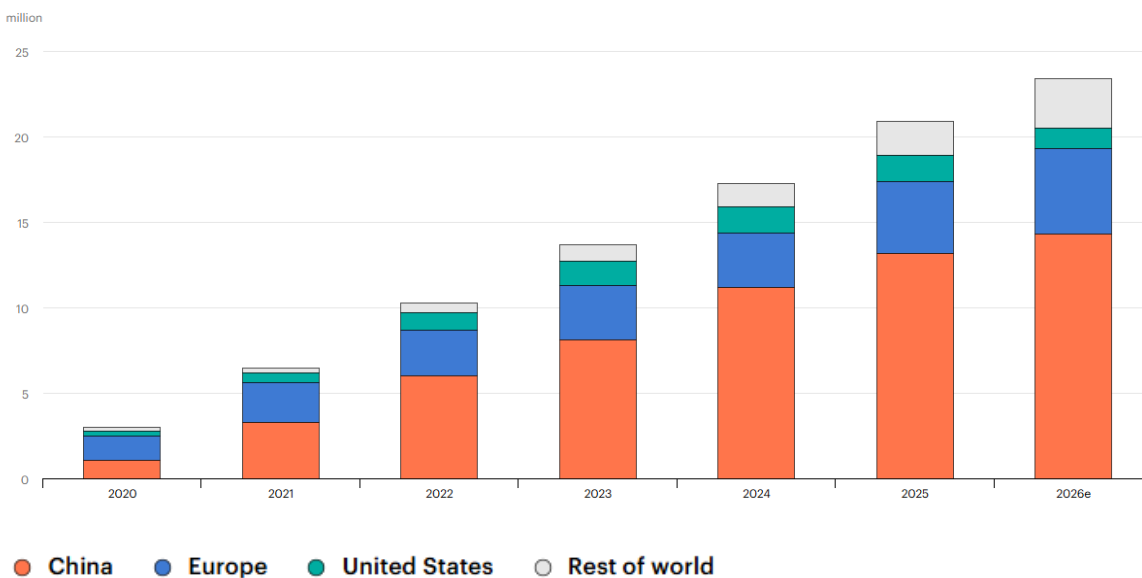
<sup>27</sup> Aaron Szabo, EPA will keep its foot on the gas in 2026, ending burdensome regulations, *The Hill* (Dec. 19, 2025), <https://thehill.com/opinion/energy-environment/5653704-epa-will-keep-its-foot-on-the-gas-in-2026-ending-burdensome-regulations/>.

win for the U.S. automakers, allowing manufacturers to sell more high-margin trucks and SUVs for the foreseeable future, while avoiding penalties or the need to buy credits to comply with regulations. In the longer term, however, this could be devastating for companies that fail to look beyond these short-term gains, as EVs become an increasing share of the global vehicle market. Indeed, vehicle electrification has already reshaped the leader board for global car sales.

## VII. The global market is shifting to EVs

Unlike the United States, countries prioritizing the transition to clean energy economies through supply side regulations (e.g., emissions standards) and demand-side programs (e.g., incentives) are seeing continued growth in their EV markets. In 2025, one out of every four new cars sold worldwide was electric. In Europe, electric car sales increased by more than 30 percent in 2025, in large part due to more stringent CO<sub>2</sub> standards that came into effect in 2025.<sup>28</sup> In Norway, the world's leading electric car market, EV sales reached 97 percent thanks to ambitious electrification goals matched with a strong incentive program.<sup>29</sup>

**Figure: Global Electric Car Sales, 2020-2026**



Source: IEA (2026), *Global electric car sales, 2020-2026*, IEA, Paris, available at: <https://www.iea.org/data-and-statistics/charts/global-electric-car-sales-2020-2026>.

While the pace of EV sales may have recently slowed in the United States, battery-powered models continue to pick up global market share.<sup>30</sup> If the U.S. fails to compete, it risks losing its

<sup>28</sup> IEA, *Global EV Outlook 2026: Trends in electric cars* (2026), <https://www.iea.org/reports/global-ev-outlook-2026/trends-in-electric-cars>.

<sup>29</sup> *Id.*

<sup>30</sup> For instance, EV (BEV and PHEV) sales in Europe are up to 32 percent year to date as of May. Clean Technica, *Europe EV Sales Report April 2026* (June 6, 2026), <https://cleantechnica.com/2026/06/01/europe-ev-sales-report-bevs-jump-42-and-reach-23-market-share/>.

economic and innovative edge to global competitors, particularly China, which is a huge market and is dominating EV production.<sup>31</sup>

### VIII. Americans seek EVs as affordability solution to high gas prices

Even with the loss of the federal tax credits and a decreasing supply of new EVs,<sup>32</sup> Americans continue to show interest in EVs. With gasoline prices increasing by as much as 50 percent since the start of the Iran war,<sup>33</sup> there has been an uptick in sales of used EVs.<sup>34</sup> During May 2026, used EV sales were up nearly 25 percent since last year.<sup>35</sup> Online searches on cars.com in March increased by 25 percent for BEVs and 7 percent for hybrids (including HEVs and PHEVs), while searches for ICE vehicles decreased by 9 percent.<sup>36</sup> At a time when Americans are looking for ways to save money, recent sales of and interest in used EVs show that drivers want a more affordable transportation option that allows them to skip the high costs of filling up with gas.

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, transportation is the second-largest household expenditure in the U.S. behind only housing.<sup>37</sup> Because used EVs are near price parity with comparable used gas models,<sup>38</sup> used EVs provide Americans with a practical way to immediately lower overall household expenses. In addition, new EVs offer drivers a lower lifetime cost-of-ownership with comparable gas cars due to lower maintenance and fuels costs.<sup>39</sup> EPA's proposed actions to delay achievable Tier 4 standards and revise the entire program will limit consumer choice by reducing the availability of both new and used EVs for years to come.<sup>40</sup> This seems out of touch and tone deaf to the needs of average Americans struggling to reduce household expenses at a time when inflation rates and gasoline prices are high.

<sup>31</sup> IEA, *Global EV Outlook 2026: Manufacturing and trade* (2026), <https://www.iea.org/reports/global-ev-outlook-2026/manufacturing-and-trade>.

<sup>32</sup> Gil Tal, *The EV Cliff Arrived on Schedule, But Not Just Buyers Ran Away*, UC Davis Electric Vehicle Research Center (April 27, 2026), <https://its.ucdavis.edu/blog/ev-cliff-arrived-schedule-not-just-buyers-ran-away>. See also Electric vehicles selling before they reach Vermont dealerships, WCAX News (June 22, 2026), <https://www.wcax.com/2026/06/22/electric-vehicles-selling-before-they-reach-vermont-dealerships/>.

<sup>33</sup> Emmett Linder, *High Gas Costs May Linger After US-Iran Deal*, New York Times (June 16, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/06/16/business/energy-environment/us-iran-deal-gas-prices.html>.

<sup>34</sup> Dan McCarthy, *Used EVs are on the upswing in America*, Canary Media (May 1, 2026), <https://www.canarymedia.com/articles/electric-vehicles/used-evs-upswing-america>.

<sup>35</sup> Stephanie Valdez Streaty, *EV Market Monitor – May 2026*, Cox Automotive (June 16, 2026), <https://www.coxautoinc.com/insights/ev-market-monitor-may-2026/>.

<sup>36</sup> Lawrence Hodge, *Electric Car Interest Surges by 25% on Cars.com*, Cars.com (April 20, 2026), <https://www.cars.com/articles/electric-car-interest-surges-25-on-cars-com-523578/>.

<sup>37</sup> U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, *Transportation Economic Trends*, available at <https://data.bts.gov/stories/s/28tb-cpjy>.

<sup>38</sup> Cox Automotive, *Q1 2026 Industry Insights and Sales Forecast Call* (March 25, 2026), <https://www.coxautoinc.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Cox-Automotive-Q1-2026-Industry-Insights-and-Sales-Forecast-Call-Presentation-March-2026.pdf>.

<sup>39</sup> Francesca Paris, *Electric vs. Gas Car Calculator: Which Is the Better Deal?*, New York Times (updated June 11, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2025/upshot/ev-vs-gas-calculator.html>.

<sup>40</sup> In the U.S., roughly three quarters of vehicle sales are used vehicles. See: Consumer Affairs, *Used car statistics 2026 [2024]* (Jul. 25, 2024), <https://www.consumeraffairs.com/automotive/used-car-statistics.html>.

## IX. States are continuing to support EV deployment

Despite the rollback of federal programs that support EVs, many states are implementing a variety of market-enabling policies and programs to foster the transition to light- and medium-duty EVs. Key examples include providing incentives to bring down the cost of new and used EVs;<sup>41</sup> administering EV charging grant programs to expand public, multi-family, and workplace charging solutions;<sup>42</sup> and conducting consumer and fleet outreach and education programs to promote greater EV awareness. In addition, 33 states have established requirements or goals to lead by example and transition state fleet vehicles and transit fleets to EVs.<sup>43</sup>

Recognizing that EV charging provides an opportunity to put downward pressure on electricity rates by spreading fixed costs of distribution infrastructure over higher volumes of electricity sales, electric utilities across the country are investing billions of dollars in transportation electrification.<sup>44</sup> For instance, utilities are administering make-ready programs to prepare sites for charging installation, fleet advisory services to support commercial fleets' transition to EVs, EV purchase incentives, programs offering free or discounted Level 2 chargers for home charging, and EV-specific time-of-use rates and demand charge relief programs to make it more affordable for consumers and fleets to drive electric.

Growing public charging networks and an expanded array of home charging solutions are making it easier than ever for drivers to transition to EVs. There are nearly 250,000 operational public charging ports<sup>45</sup> deployed across the U.S. today with new stations coming online along highways, at retail businesses and workplaces, in multi-family housing developments, and many other locations. From 2024 to 2025 alone, more than 40,000 new publicly accessible Level 2 and DC charging ports were installed in the U.S.<sup>46</sup> In addition, many auto manufacturers provide home charging solutions that include a combination of financial incentives, complimentary charging equipment, and certified installer partnerships.

Advancements in charging technologies, network monitoring, and maintenance practices have increased station uptime and improved consumer confidence in public charging networks. Charging reliability for fast charging stations continues to improve even with the acceleration of charging station installations. In the first quarter of 2026, fast charging reliability ranged from

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<sup>41</sup> Kelley Blue Book, Electric Car Rebates and Incentives: What to Know by State (May 6, 2026), <https://www.kbb.com/car-advice/electric-vehicle-rebates-by-state/>.

<sup>42</sup> ChargePoint, Incentives, <https://www.chargepoint.com/incentives?srsId=AfmBOooBeQVz6-wag8UxsUPqC7Reo019WUnLHJPQSTXAhp39zPHVpQc#industry=&page=0&search&state=all&type=all>.

<sup>43</sup> Advanced Energy United, Policy and Progress: The State Fleet Roadmap to Zero-Emission Vehicles (April 9, 2025), <https://advancedenergyunited.org/blog/policy-and-progress-the-state-fleet-roadmap-to-zero-emission-vehicles/>.

<sup>44</sup> Atlas Public Policy, Electric Utility Filings Dashboard, <https://www.atlasevhub.com/public-policy/electric-utility-filings/>. (accessed June 8, 2026).

<sup>45</sup> U.S. Department of Energy, Alternative Fuels Data Center, Alternative Fueling Station Counts by State, <https://afdc.energy.gov/stations/states>. (accessed June 8, 2026).

<sup>46</sup> *Id.*

90-95% in most markets.<sup>47</sup> With the North American Charging Standard (J3400), industry is also coalescing around plug standardization, which will simplify and expand access to charging. Together, expanded charging solutions and increased charging reliability are helping to alleviate range anxiety, improve user experience, and make EVs a practical transportation option for Americans.

## X. Conclusion

States and the federal government have critical responsibilities under the cooperative federalism framework of the Clean Air Act to protect public health and the environment from the impacts of air pollution. EPA's piecemeal approach to dismantling the multi-pollutant standards is disruptive and leaves the states and their citizens increasingly vulnerable to the harmful and costly impacts of motor vehicle pollution. If finalized, EPA's proposal will lead to further regulatory uncertainty and delays, result in more motor vehicle pollution, limit consumer choice in the U.S., and hinder the global competitiveness of American automobile companies. For these reasons, NESCAUM and the OTC strongly oppose EPA's proposal to extend the Tier 3 standards to model years 2027 and 2028.

Sincerely,



Michelle Manion,  
Executive Director, NESCAUM



Paul E. Farrell  
Chair, OTC Mobile Sources Committee  
Director, Planning & Standards Division  
Bureau of Air Management,  
Connecticut Department of Energy and  
Environmental Protection

cc: NESCAUM Directors  
OTC Air Directors

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<sup>47</sup> Paren, US EV Fast Charging — Q1 2026, <https://www.paren.app/reports/us-ev-fast-charging-q1-2026#utilization-and-reliability-2>.