GOV. MALLOY AND COMMISSIONER KLEE BLAST TRUMP ADMINISTRATION DECISION TO WEAKEN TAILPIPE EMISSIONS AND FUEL EFFICIENCY STANDARDS

(HARTFORD, CT) – Governor Dannel P. Malloy and Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) Commissioner Rob Klee are criticizing a decision announced today by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to roll-back greenhouse gas and fuel economy standards for automobiles.

“As we have seen too often from the Trump administration, the EPA’s announcement today again abdicates its leadership role on climate, energy and the environment,” Governor Malloy said. “States have long led the way on many important issues, including climate change. President Trump is once again putting the interests of big business ahead of the health and economic interests of the American people. This shortsighted decision will lead to decreasing fuel efficiency, which means more frequent stops at the gas station and higher gas bills for Connecticut drivers. We will continue to work with California and other like-minded states to safeguard the protections provided by the federal Clean Air Act and the Advanced Clean Car program.”

“Human-induced climate change is the most significant environmental issue we face today, and taking action now to mitigate the most damaging impacts of climate change offers one of the greatest opportunities for reshaping, reenergizing, and transforming our economy to create the green jobs and green industries of the future,” Commissioner Klee said. “While this administration may actively try to prevent states from exerting their sovereign rights to fill the void created by federal inaction, we will continue to do our part as a national leader to reduce carbon emissions that contribute to climate change, and look forward to a time when our federal government again allows science and not the demands of the auto industry to drive the important goals and objectives of the advanced clean cars program.”

California is allowed to set their own motor vehicle tailpipe standards in recognition of their unique air quality challenges and of their early efforts that pre-dated the federal Clean Air Act. Connecticut and 11 other states are authorized to adopt California’s standards under section 177 of the federal Clean Air Act provided U.S. EPA first issues a waiver to California under section
209 of the federal Clean Air Act indicating California’s standards are at least as stringent as federal standards.

The standards at issue are part of a broader agreement made in 2012 among the State of California, U.S. EPA, U.S. DOT/NHTSA and the major auto manufacturers. Under this agreement, California and the federal government agreed to harmonize state and federal tailpipe emission standards for greenhouse gases with federal fuel efficiency standards. The State of California agreed to find vehicles certified as meeting the federal tailpipe standards as being deemed in compliance with the California standards (also adopted by 12 other states, and when combined represent 35% of the national light duty vehicle market). The agreement included a mid-term evaluation during which California assessed three elements of the clean cars program: the zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) regulation, the one milligram per mile (mg/mi) particulate matter (PM) standard, and the light-duty vehicle greenhouse gas standards for 2022 and later model years. U.S. EPA agreed to conduct a similar review of the standards for model year 2022-25.

California’s technical staff worked with U.S. EPA and NHTSA to review the federal light-duty greenhouse gas standards for 2022 through 2025 model years. This review included collaborating on a second joint Technical Assessment Report (TAR) to re-assess the technical assumptions and analysis used to develop the greenhouse gas standards. The Draft (Joint) TAR was published for public comment in July 2016. After reviewing public comments, U.S. EPA updated their analysis and published for public comment in November 2016 a Proposed Determination that the 2022 through 2025 federal standards remain as adopted. Subsequent to a review of public comment, U.S. EPA concluded their midterm evaluation and published a Final Determination in January 2017 that affirmed the existing federal greenhouse gas standards would remain as adopted. In March 2017, EPA rescinded the Final Determination, and announced that a “new” Final Determination would be published by April 1, 2018.

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