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NESCAUM Statement on EPA's Reconsideration of the 2019 Withdrawal of California's Waiver to Enforce Greenhouse Gas Standards for Cars and Light Trucks

*Statement of Paul J. Miller, Executive Director
Northeast States for Coordinated Air Use Management*

Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced that it is reconsidering the previous withdrawal of a waiver of preemption to California for measures providing year-over-year greenhouse gas reductions from automobiles and requiring automakers to sell more electric cars. Today's action also announced EPA is reconsidering erroneous statements regarding the well-established authority of other states to adopt these measures.

We commend EPA for taking steps to restore the waiver that was unlawfully revoked by the Safer Affordable Fuel-Efficient Vehicles (SAFE) Rule. We are also pleased that the agency is revisiting statements attempting to block the fundamental right of other states to adopt California's greenhouse gas emission standards and zero emission vehicle regulations. Our states and the nation will benefit from the continued reductions in motor vehicle pollution that the California program provides and corresponding public health and economic benefits.

Across the country, the transportation sector is now the single largest source of greenhouse gas emissions and a major contributor to smog, particulate matter, and toxic air pollutants that endanger public health and the environment. Strong national greenhouse gas standards are critical to tackle threats to air quality and climate stability. At the same time, the authority embedded in the Clean Air Act for California to set more protective standards and for other states to adopt those standards is an important state right that has historically paved the way for stronger national standards to protect public health and the environment.

In partnership with California, our states will continue to play a vital role in the effort to decarbonize the transportation sector and curb emissions of other harmful air pollutants from cars and trucks. However, strong national standards are also needed to ensure the U.S. automotive industry remains globally competitive in a rapidly changing marketplace and position our country to be a climate leader. Therefore, we urge EPA to act swiftly to recapture the tons of greenhouse gas emissions that would be lost under the SAFE Rule and to develop future standards that drive a rapid transition to zero emission vehicles.

About NESCAUM

The Northeast States for Coordinated Air Use Management (NESCAUM) is a nonprofit multistate association of the eight state air quality agencies in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont. NESCAUM provides scientific, technical, analytical, and policy support to the air quality and climate programs of its air agency members, including assistance with the implementation of national environmental programs required under the Clean Air Act and other federal legislation.

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