

New research shows corporate advocacy to weaken the EPA Clean Trucks Plan

Truck makers, fossil fuel industry and cross-sector industry groups push back against climate rules

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New *InfluenceMap analysis* of corporate engagement during the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) public comment period for the recently proposed Phase 3 GHG emission standards found extensive efforts by truck manufacturers, fossil fuel companies, and their respective industry associations to weaken the heavy-duty vehicle emissions standard, which would cut diesel pollution under the EPA Clean Trucks Plan.

In the most recent series of comments submitted directly to the EPA, truck makers, and the fossil fuel industry echoed similar sentiments and proposed revisions to the regulation that weaken the ambition of the standards. Exposure to diesel pollution from trucks can lead to serious health conditions like [asthma and respiratory illnesses and can worsen existing heart and lung disease, especially in children and the elderly](#), according to the EPA. The industry and lobbying groups advocated for a variety of modifications to the program, including calls to delay its implementation, maintaining existing credit multipliers that weaken program outcomes, and opposing rapid electrification.

The analysis shows how oil majors and truck makers use similar arguments to weaken key rules that would cut harmful pollutants and decarbonize US trucks and other heavy-duty vehicles. Fossil-powered trucks remain a key source of demand for oil in the US, with negative advocacy potentially creating a major threat to US climate goals on transport. Multiple groups cited concerns around grid stress and charging infrastructure, but electric utility companies responsible for maintaining the grid exhibited strong support for the regulation.

Key findings from the analysis include:

- **The Truck and Engine Manufacturers Association (EMA)** advocated weakening numerous key aspects of the EPA's proposed "Phase 3" GHG emissions standards

and called for substantial revisions, without which, it said that the phase 3 standards would be “arbitrary, capricious and wholly unreasonable.”

- Truck makers advocated reducing the stringency and ambition of the proposed GHG standards. In June 2023 comments, **Daimler Truck** and **Volvo Group** advocated for the delay of the "Phase 3" standards from 2028 to 2030. Both groups are members of the EMA and have been shown in other [Influence Map analyses](#) to support clean truck technologies through their public relations campaigns. Alongside this, Daimler Truck, Volvo Group, and **PACCAR** opposed increasing the ambition of existing "Phase 2" emissions standards in June 2023 comments to the EPA.
- Fossil fuel industry advocacy remains highly negative. **The American Fuel and Petrochemical Manufacturers Association (AFPM)** and **the American Petroleum Institute (API)** refuted the legality of the standard's focus on electrification, instead advocating for a "technology neutral" approach in June 2023 comments to the EPA. API also organized a July 2023 joint letter addressed to government officials with over a hundred industry associations, primarily representing oil and gas producers, expressing general concern with the legislation and advocating against its focus on electrification.
- Larger cross-sector industry groups have advocated to weaken the legislation. **The US Chamber of Commerce** appeared to advocate for the EPA to include numerous flexibilities that would likely make the proposed standards less stringent. **The National Federation of Independent Business** also requested that the EPA completely withdraw the rule.
- Electric utility companies and industry groups **including Advanced Energy United and Zero Emission Transportation Association** expressed clear support for the proposed rule. The **Edison Electric Institute, Con Edison,** and **PG&E** all supported the regulations in June 2023 comments to the EPA.

Addressing the findings, InfluenceMap analyst Leo Menninger said: *“Engagement with EPA’s new emissions standards has revealed that the interests and tactics of some key players in the auto and oil industry are very aligned; both sectors are strongly advocating to weaken the stringency of the proposed Phase 3 standards and asking for a delay in its implementation. With a significant percentage of US’s GHG emissions targets relying on the decarbonization of heavy-duty vehicles, stringent and timely regulations are necessary to achieve the US government target of 100% zero-emission medium and heavy-duty vehicle sales by 2040.”*

The EPA Clean Trucks Plan, a series of regulations announced in August 2021, are designed to reduce GHG emissions and other harmful air pollutants from HDVs over the next three years. In March 2022, the EPA released the first of its heavy-duty related proposals under the Clean Trucks Plan to regulate the emission standards between 2027-2029.

Announced in April 2023, the U.S. EPA's latest federal "Phase 3" greenhouse gas (GHG) emission standards for heavy-duty vehicles (HDVs) called for more stringent GHG emission standards from 2028-2032. The comment period/consultation has since ended, and the announcement of the new rule is imminent.

For more information and to read the full analysis, click below.

[*Click here for the full analysis*](#)

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