

Madison Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway and Sen. Melissa Agard: Call for a new round of clean car standards

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(Madison, Wisconsin) - Wisconsin elected leaders and health experts convened today to call on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to introduce a new round of vehicle pollution limits to protect Wisconsinites and save them money. The event was sponsored by Wisconsin Health Professionals for Climate Action.

Madison Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway, Senator Melissa Agard, Representative Lisa Subeck, and Kelly DeMarco of Wisconsin Health Professionals for Climate Action, held a press conference to call on the Biden Administration and Wisconsin's federal elected officials to support a new round of stronger federal clean car standards from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Advocates say this new rule will make good on promises from President Biden and his administration to put in place the strongest possible standards and drive investments in clean cars and zero pollution electric vehicles, while spurring manufacturing and job growth.

Mayor Rhodes-Conway emphasized that new standards will be a win-win for public health and economic benefits. "This will boost innovation and reduce costs at the pump for drivers, while safeguarding those most at risk from pollution at the same time."

"With decisive action towards stricter EPA vehicle pollution limits, Wisconsin stands to gain on all fronts," said Sen. Agard. "We need the Biden Administration to deliver

on its commitment to safeguard public health by reducing vehicle pollution, and in doing so, unleash a wave of economic prosperity through new manufacturing and job creation in the Badger State.”

All the speakers outlined the need for a new round of clean cars standards and urged the EPA to move this March to enact new strong tailpipe pollution limits for model years 2027 – 2035 to limit carbon pollution and spur the clean energy economy. They say the Biden Administration and EPA need to urgently address the problem of tailpipe pollution from cars and light duty trucks that endanger the health of Madison and other Wisconsin communities, particularly those most vulnerable who have already suffered disproportionately from pollution impacts and can ill afford it.

“We cannot ignore the disproportionate and dangerous impact air pollution has had on people of color and on low-income communities. These groups already face higher rates of asthma and other respiratory conditions exacerbated by dirty air,” added Rep. Subeck. “Strengthening our clean air standards will help all of us live healthier lives, especially those whose health is most at risk.”

Event speakers also lauded Sen. Tammy Baldwin and Rep. Gwen Moore as well as other members of Wisconsin’s congressional delegation for their previous support for strong clean car standards but encouraged them to call on the EPA to build on previous clean car standards by setting even stronger limits for the next round that could be issued by this March. They emphasized the goal of fighting for these longer-term standards is to protect families, children and seniors’ health.

“We’re not talking about hypotheticals. Across Wisconsin there are over 75,000 children at risk from asthma, 6,000 of those are in Dane County alone,” said Ms. DeMarco. “If we really want to protect these vulnerable kids from vehicle pollution and ensure that all families are living with healthy air, we need to commit to a transition to cleaner and zero pollution vehicles.”

The transportation sector is the leading source of the carbon pollution driving climate change. Making cars cleaner can dramatically cut pollution damaging the health of Wisconsin residents as well as reduce pollution driving climate change, avert the most catastrophic impacts of the climate crisis, and address longstanding environmental and economic injustice.