

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 8, 2019

The Honorable Andrew Wheeler
Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

The Honorable Elaine Chao
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Wheeler and Secretary Chao:

We, as members representing the San Joaquin Valley of California, strongly urge you not to implement and rescind the National Highway Traffic Safety Agency (NHTSA) and the US Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) proposed rule – “Safer Affordable Fuel-Efficient (SAFE) Vehicle Rule for Model Years 2021-2026 Passenger Cars and Light Trucks” (SAFE Vehicles rule). If finalized, this rule would remove California’s authority to implement its greenhouse gas standards for light duty vehicles and its zero-emission vehicles mandates. Revoking these mandates could result in the region failing to meet several reduction goals, including those for greenhouse gases and criteria pollutant emissions. Failure to meet such reduction goals has a direct impact on public health, housing, movement of goods, and ultimately, the quality of life in our region. If this rule is implemented it will cause irreversible damage to the San Joaquin Valley’s hard-won progress in combatting air pollution.

The San Joaquin Valley is known for its diversity in culture and agricultural contributions to our nation and world. Due to the geographical makeup and location of the Valley, this region of California suffers heavily from mobile source emissions. On an average day, more than one hundred thousand vehicles, ranging from trucks to auto mobiles can be seen traveling north and south on the two main highways running through the Valley – California State Route 99 and Interstate Highway 5. Additional factors include air pollution blown from Northern California and activities from three million Valley residents operating two million vehicles.¹ A combination of the above characteristics puts the San Joaquin Valley at unique risk from air pollution and related issues.

California’s efforts to reduce air pollution began in the late 1960’s which led to the creation of the California Air Resources Board (CARB). CARB has time and time again led the charge for the state of California by setting mobile source standards to reduce the amount of air pollution, which is influenced by various factors such as increased population, climate, and topography. To further confront the challenges posed by air pollution specifically in the San Joaquin Valley, the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD) was established in 1991. The SJVAPCD’s mission is to “improve the health and quality of life for all the Valley residents through cooperative and effective air quality

¹ San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, “Frequently Asked Questions,” The Air Pollution Problem, accessed September 30, 2019, https://www.valleyair.org/General_info/Frequently_Asked_Questions.htm#About%20The%20Air%20Pollution%20Problem.

programs.”² The District is responsible for the implementation of state and federal requirements in order to meet lower emission standards through reduction programs and public education outreach, which has resulted in air quality improvement over the last 15 years. The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District’s collective efforts have resulted in the Valley being at attainment for Carbon Monoxide (CO) since 1994, attainment for federal PM10 standard in 2008, and is currently working on attainment for Ozone and PM 2.5.³

Implementation of the SAFE Rule would threaten the progress that has been made on air quality in the San Joaquin Valley. It takes a joint effort at the local, state, and federal level to ensure all corners of the Valley are taking all measures necessary to reduce the amount of pollution emitted. The Air District’s continued success should be a reminder that attainment is possible and can be done if the proper programs are implemented. We have heard our constituents’ worries about this rule and we, as Members of Congress, strongly urge you to reconsider your agency’s stance on this matter.

Sincerely,



JIM COSTA
Member of Congress



TJ COX
Member of Congress



JOSH HARDER
Member of Congress

²“San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, “About the District,” Mission & Core Values, accessed September 30, 2019, https://www.valleyair.org/General_info/aboutdist.htm#Mission.

³ San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, “Frequently Asked Questions,” The Air Pollution Problem, accessed September 30, 2019, https://www.valleyair.org/General_info/Frequently_Asked_Questions.htm#About%20The%20Air%20Pollution%20Problem.