

## **Ford should focus on its electric vehicles, not CAFE standards** **Buffalo News, Another Voice, Published March 14, 2018**

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A YouTube video titled "Tell Ford to Put Clean Cars in the Fast Lane" shows a driver putting the key in and starting up a Ford Focus. He looks quizzically at the stick shift with all gears labeled R, and then puts the car into what should be drive. Seconds later, he is behind the wheel of a Model T. The point being made is that in the attempt to roll back the Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards, Ford would create average fuel economy standards that would be lower than the mpg than their signature model of the 1920s.

Is Ford the only automaker working with the Trump administration to delay or weaken CAFE standards? No, but Ford is singularly visible in its lobbying efforts to weaken clean car standards, which reduce carbon emissions, protect health and save consumers at the gas pump. It is an obvious repudiation of their alliance with President Obama in 2011 when he announced the current clean car standards.

Why would Ford need to backtrack on their 2011 commitments? To answer this, remember that retailers advertise to create demand for their products. Try to remember the last advertisement you saw for Ford – it was probably for the F-150. The F-Series vehicles accounted for more than 5 percent of all new vehicles sold in the U.S. in 2017 and one-third of the sales of Ford. They are also the least fuel efficient vehicles in the Ford lineup, dragging down the average mpg for the fleet.

With its recent marketing and lobbying history, what do we make of the recent announcement that Ford will have 40 electrified vehicles (16 fully electric) for global sales by 2022? Previously, Ford CEO Jim Hackett said the automaker would be shifting capital investment away from sedans to develop more trucks. If the product mix continues its shift to larger vehicles, Ford will still have issues meeting the 2025 CAFE fleet standard of 54.5 mpg, even with new electric vehicles available for sale.

Another key word in the electric vehicle announcement is "global." Ford, like many manufacturers, makes vehicles for sales in countries without the stringent safety requirements of the United States. Cars like the compact Falcon, the subcompact Ka and a version of the Focus that is totally different than the version sold here, show the potential that these vehicles may not be destined for the United States.

Ford has done such a bad job of marketing its current electric vehicles that most Americans are unaware that Ford sells e-vehicles. The company still has not made a charging station (needed to sell any plug-in vehicle) mandatory for its dealership. A greenwash for the corporate website, the fully electric vehicle is unavailable at most dealerships. If the past is any indication, the success of Ford will still hinge on relaxation of CAFE standards, even after its new electrified vehicles become available.

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