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Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

FACT SHEET

AUTOMOBILE EMISSION STANDARDS

The President today sent to the Congress proposed legislation to continue the present Federal automobile emission standards through the 1981 model year, so as to permit a balance among the important objectives of improving air quality, protecting public health and safety, and avoiding unnecessary increases in consumer costs for automobiles, decreases in gasoline mileage, and increases in the Nation's dependence on imported oil.

The President also asked the Chairmen of the Senate and House Committees which have jurisdiction over the Clean Air Act to hold public hearings so that Administration witnesses can present findings from the executive branch study which led to the President's conclusion that current standards should be continued.

BACKGROUND

- . As the Clean Air Act now stands, Federal auto emission standards for 1977 would be tightened from current standards for oxides of nitrogen (NOx), and standards for 1978 model cars would be tightened for hydrocarbons (HC), carbonmonoxide (CO), and still further for oxides of nitrogen (NOx).
- . On June 27, 1975, the President sent to Congress a special message which:
 - . summarized the findings of an extensive executive branch study of the air quality, public health, consumer cost, gasoline mileage, and other implications of alternative emission standards; and
 - . presented his conclusions that the best balance among the various important objectives could be achieved by continuing 1975-76 standards through the 1981 model year.
- . Subcommittees of the Senate Committee on Public Works and the House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce are now considering changes in the Clean Air Act.

THE PROPOSED LEGISLATION

The bill proposed by the President would amend the Clean Air Act to continue 1975-1976 auto emission standards for hydrocarbons (HC), carbonmonoxide (CO) and oxides of nitrogen (NOx) through the 1981 model year. The Federal standards, in grams per mile, would be:

<u>Model Year</u>	<u>HC</u>	<u>CO</u>	<u>NOx</u>
1977 - 1981	1.5	15.0	3.1

For comparison, the average emissions from uncontrolled cars were:

Pre-1968	8.7	87	3.5
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<u>Model Year</u>	<u>HC</u>	<u>CO</u>	<u>NOx</u>
Past Federal standards have been:			
1970-1971	4.1	34.0	(No standard; emissions
1972	3.0	28.0	rose to 4.5 to 5.0)
1973-1974	3.0	28.0	3.1
1975-1976	1.5	15.0	3.1

As the Clean Air Act now stands, Federal standards would be:

1977	1.5	15.0	2.0
1978 and later	.41	3.4	.4

THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH STUDY

The interagency study considered the air quality, health, consumer cost and energy impacts of various alternative emission standards that could be applied to 1977 and future model cars. The alternative standards considered in the study ranged from standards less stringent than the current ones (i.e., Canadian standards and 1973-74 U.S. Standards) to those now prescribed in the Clean Air Act for 1978 and future years. In summary, the principal conclusions from the interagency study were:

1. Controls on automobiles necessary to meet the current standards have reduced ambient concentration levels in those areas that have auto-related HC and CO problems; and have reduced the rate at which NOx concentrations have increased.
2. Through the year 1985, tighter or looser standards for HC, CO and NOx, in the range considered, would make little difference in the air quality in those areas that have an auto-related pollution problem. Many parts of the country have no auto-related pollution problem.
3. Present data are not sufficient to make specific calculations or final judgments on what sulfuric acid emission levels would be safe from a public health perspective. However, it is believed that sulfuric acid emissions could prove to be a significant public health risk and that emissions could increase substantially if standards more stringent than the 1975-1976 standards are adopted.
4. Further mandated reductions in emissions from automobiles may have the effect of increasing or creating pollutants other than HC, CO, and NOx.
5. Auto emission standards have had an impact on fuel economy and, therefore, on our nation's total petroleum demands and reliance on foreign sources. Standards tighter than the 1975-1976 standards will result in higher initial car costs and higher operating costs.
6. The basic philosophy and approach to future auto emission controls need to be reconsidered in light of current conditions.
 - (a) Significantly tighter standards at this time may preclude continued development of some promising fuel efficient and low emission technologies.
 - (b) Actions to reduce auto emissions must take into account other sources of the same pollutant.
7. Prompt Congressional action is needed on auto emission standards in order to establish a five-year emission program which is compatible with a strict fuel efficiency program.

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