

## **CAFE Public Hearing Opening Remarks**

Dr. Steven Cliff, NHTSA Acting Administrator

**Wednesday, October 13, 2021 |**

Virtual

### **AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY**

Welcome to today's public hearing on NHTSA's proposal for the Corporate Average Fuel Economy standards for model years 2024-2026 passenger cars and light trucks. I appreciate your time and interest in this important issue. Public engagement with our work is crucial to making our work successful, and I look forward to hearing your comments on our proposal.

On his first day in office, President Biden tasked us with reviewing the Corporate Average Fuel Economy standards and seeing if they could be improved. Climate change and protecting the environment are two of the President's top priorities, and they are two of the U.S. Department of Transportation's priorities as well.

We cannot address climate change without addressing how much passenger cars and light trucks contribute to the problem. And this is also an issue of equity, another one of the President's priorities. We know that harmful effects from the transportation system disproportionately affect low-income communities and communities of color.

NHTSA is directed by statute to set maximum feasible CAFE standards to improve energy conservation. In September, NHTSA published the proposal you are commenting on today. The proposal would increase fuel economy standards by 8 percent a year for model year 2024-2026 cars and light trucks. By model year 2026, we currently estimate this would result in an average of roughly 48 miles per gallon fleetwide. The standards would also save billions of dollars for consumers who would use less gasoline, and provide crucial environmental benefits from burning less fossil fuel.

We conducted rigorous analysis, and our proposal considers a range of alternatives. After all of that, we tentatively concluded that this level – Alternative 2 in our proposal – is the maximum feasible for these model years.

We believe these standards can be met because the industry is already moving in this direction. They are already retooling future models to meet the demand for more efficient, more environmentally friendly vehicles. Nearly all auto manufacturers have announced new electric vehicle models, with some even committing to an eventual all-electric future.

These strategic moves show that more stringent standards are feasible. After all, the companies would not make these announcements if they didn't believe they could meet them, and that the market demand existed.

Today, we will hear your comments on our proposal. As Derrell said earlier, each speaker will have a maximum of three minutes each. We want to make sure we have time to hear from everyone.

A number of NHTSA staff are listening to this public hearing, and several will be turning on their cameras throughout the hearing. They may ask clarifying questions during the oral presentations but will not

respond to the presentations at that time. NHTSA will read and consider every comment we receive in the development of the final rule.