



CREATING GOOD JOBS, A CLEAN ENVIRONMENT, AND A FAIR AND THRIVING ECONOMY

## TESTIMONY

**Frank Houston, Regional Program Manager for Michigan  
BlueGreen Alliance**  
**Before the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the  
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration**  
***RE: Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on the Safer Affordable Fuel-  
Efficient  
Vehicles Rule for Model Years 2021-2026 for Passenger Cars and Light  
Trucks***  
**Docket No. NHTSA-2018-0067; EPA-HQ-OAR-2018-0283**  
**September 25, 2018 – Dearborn, MI**

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

I'm here today on behalf of the BlueGreen Alliance—and also as someone who was born, raised in Michigan and proudly chose to come back home and now raise a family here. For people like me who grew up in Michigan, you grow up knowing that as the auto industry grows and goes, so goes Michigan.

When I came back home to Michigan to settle down in 2005 I found this state in the midst of the worse economic downturn of my lifetime. Friends and family—people I grew up with and cared for—were losing their jobs, often their homes and their hope, that Michigan could provide a viable future for themselves and their loved ones.

The good news now is that after some tough years, many of those same friends and family now are starting to get their lives back on more stable footing. A big piece of that has been the automotive recovery, which has been aided, enhanced and strengthened by the strong fuel

economy standards you are considering rolling back today.

Sound, long-term fuel economy standards have helped bring back quality, American manufacturing and jobs that support our communities. We need to keep that progress going. Your proposal to rollback these standards will move us in the wrong direction, and risks sending investment, manufacturing, and jobs overseas.

We know that fuel efficiency is already a jobs driver in Michigan. Nearly 70,000 workers in Michigan are making the components and materials needed to make cars, trucks, and SUVs more fuel efficient than ever.<sup>1</sup> Automakers have made or promised at least \$23 billion in investments in 41 facilities in Michigan alone since 2008<sup>2</sup>—in part because of the fuel economy standards that are driving innovation—and that’s without counting enhanced investments made by suppliers. It’s important to keep these standards strong to keep driving innovation and to help ensure we continue to grow.

The standards have worked and will continue to work if we let them. They have ensured that any vehicle a consumer chooses to buy—whether a car, truck, or SUV—gets more efficient every year. As a parent with six children in the house is definitely appreciated.

Strong standards keep investment flowing in our communities and secure the jobs of thousands

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<sup>1</sup> BlueGreen Alliance, *Supplying Ingenuity II: U.S. Suppliers Of Key Clean, Fuel-Efficient Vehicle Technologies*, May 2017. Available: <https://www.bluegreenalliance.org/si2>

<sup>2</sup> BlueGreen Alliance, *Driving Investment: How Fuel Efficiency is Rebuilding American Manufacturing*. January 2018. Available: <https://www.bluegreenalliance.org/resources/driving-investment-how-fuel-efficiency-is-rebuilding-american-manufacturing/>

of workers in my state. But in the agencies' own analysis they find that freezing fuel economy standards will result far less technology investment and thousands fewer American manufacturing jobs. The ultimate economic impact could be even worse for the nearly 1 million American manufacturing workers employed in the automotive sector. This freeze would mean we lose ground in the race with other countries to design and build the best new vehicles and risk losing more American auto jobs to other nations.

Michigan families like mine need a growing middle class, not policies make things harder for our communities. We need good jobs and fair wages, so that working families can provide for their children, save for a rainy day, and invest in their communities.

The instability this proposed rule change would jeopardize our progress and risk the very instability that it has taken years for Michigan to recover from.

I urge you to reject this rollback of fuel economy standards. Keeping strong standards will help us leave our kids a planet they can live on and build up a cleaner economy that will be the foundation for prosperity for generations of working people to come.