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AS STATES SUE TO BLOCK EPA GREENHOUSE GAS ROLLBACK, ROSEVILLE'S ECO, INC. HELPS MANUFACTURERS STAY AHEAD OF THE CURVE

ECO, Inc. says April 20 is not a finish line — it's the starting gun for a court battle that could be long-lived.

ROSEVILLE, CA — The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has moved, subject to ongoing litigation, to rescind the landmark 2009 Endangerment Finding — the foundational policy declaring greenhouse gases a threat to human health — and repeal all federal greenhouse gas (GHG) emission standards for cars, trucks, and heavy-duty vehicles. The action is set to take effect April 20, 2026. However, ECO, Inc., a Roseville-based global leader in engine and vehicle emissions certification and compliance, is urging manufacturers not to treat that date as a finish line.

"This federal action does not provide regulatory certainty," says Charlie Zendner, Program Manager at ECO, Inc. "Lawsuits challenging the rescission indicate a very real possibility that it could be delayed, altered, or even overturned. Engine and vehicle manufacturers should prepare for all scenarios."

What the EPA Action Does — and Does Not — Change

If upheld, the EPA's action would remove all GHG emission standards from federal regulations covering light-duty, medium-duty, and heavy-duty vehicles. However, a wide range of compliance requirements would remain fully intact, including criteria exhaust emission standards (NOx, particulate matter, etc.), evaporative and refueling emission standards, onboard diagnostics and VECI labeling, NHTSA fuel economy (CAFE) standards, and emission warranty and in-use verification testing for criteria pollutants.

What would disappear: federal GHG emission standards for passenger vehicles as well as commercial trucks, battery monitoring and durability requirements, fleet average CO₂ standards, and the associated credit programs. For heavy-duty vehicles, that includes the Phase 1 through 3 GHG standards for vocational vehicles and tractors, which have governed commercial truck manufacturing since 2014.

April 20 Is the Deadline to Sue — And Many Already Have

The April 20 effective date carries a legal significance beyond the rule itself: it is also the deadline for any party to file a petition for review in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit. That means the full scope of legal opposition will come into focus on the same day the rule is set to take effect — and the opposition is already substantial.

Led by California, 24 states, 10 cities, and 5 counties filed suit on March 19 to block the EPA's action. The Zero Emission Transportation Association filed its own petition in the D.C. Circuit on February 20. Eighteen young plaintiffs represented by Our Children's Trust filed a separate challenge on February 18. A broad coalition of

public health and environmental groups, including the Sierra Club, NRDC, Earthjustice, and the Environmental Defense Fund, filed the first legal challenge the same day the rule was published.

That is at least four distinct legal challenges — from states, industry, youth advocates, and public health organizations — all converging on the same federal court.

Under Section 209 of the Clean Air Act, California holds unique authority to set its own vehicle emission standards, and other states may adopt those standards under Section 177. Those state-level requirements remain fully enforceable regardless of the federal repeal. Any manufacturer selling vehicles in California, or in the dozen-plus Section 177 states, must currently certify to CARB's standards. For most major auto and truck manufacturers, that represents a significant share of their U.S. market. Of note, the Department of Justice is separately suing California to block its EV mandate, adding yet another legal layer to an already complex landscape.

The Legal Timeline: Manufacturers Could Be in Limbo Until 2027 and Beyond

Even if courts move quickly, resolution is not imminent. In a best-case fast-track scenario, the D.C. Circuit could issue a ruling by late 2026 — but a Supreme Court appeal could push a final decision to mid-2027 or later. For manufacturers making capital investments, product planning decisions, or certification infrastructure choices right now, that is a long time to be operating without clarity.

ECO, Inc. is advising clients — including global vehicle and engine manufacturers — to continue planning for both federal and California/Section 177 compliance simultaneously. The firm cautions that decisions which would be difficult or costly to reverse should not be made based solely on the assumption that the federal rollback will hold.

"With mounting legal opposition to federal actions, the regulatory outcome may be determined by the courts," says Zendner. "Manufacturers should maintain compliance and consider all scenarios until that outcome is reached."

About ECO, Inc.

ECO, Inc. (Engine Certification Organization) is a Roseville, California-based firm providing engine and vehicle emissions certification and compliance services to manufacturers worldwide. The company works across light-duty, medium-duty, and heavy-duty vehicle categories, navigating North American certification and homologation requirements including EPA, CARB, and Environment Canada. ECO, Inc. serves as a trusted compliance partner for many of the world's leading engine, vehicle, and equipment manufacturers. More information at Enginercert.com.

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