It's been a rough few months for vehicle electrification efforts in the United States. While Congress swaps proposals to eliminate federal electric vehicle purchase, manufacturing, and charging incentives in order to "pay for" massive tax cuts for the wealthy, President Trump last week signed a Congressional Review Act resolution that claims to eliminate California's nation-leading zero-emission vehicle standards (a move that, as Ann Carlson noted last month, is both obviously illegal and possibly unstoppable). Those standards had been adopted in a dozen states and were the clearest path remaining to a clean vehicle fleet in the US after the Administration announced plans to abandon federal fuel economy and vehicle emissions reduction mandates.

A new analysis from Bloomberg suggests that these steps will significantly slow the US electrification transition–under the existing federal and state EV policies, Bloomberg projected EVs would constitute nearly 50% of all automobile sales in 2030; with the changes threatened by Trump and Congress, this number drops to 27%. (The analysis anticipates healthier–though still inadequate from a climate perspective–progress around the rest of the globe, and highlights the United States' steadily shrinking role as a market and policy leader.)

In a country that sells around 15 million new vehicles every year, this means millions more fossil-fuel powered vehicles on the road, and millions more tons of carbon dioxide emitted to the atmosphere and hundreds of thousands more tons of cancer- and asthma-causing pollutants swirling in our communities, every year, for the decades-long life of those vehicles.

This is deeply distressing. It also offers important perspective–admittedly sometimes hard to maintain–in the long debate over the transition from fossil fueled to electrified transportation. Cutting vehicle emissions that harm our lungs and the climate is worth pursuing, even if the most ambitious targets and policies are blocked. And new research shows that adding advanced EVs to our electric grid can provide vital reliability benefits and generate statewide savings. Advocates are increasingly looking to the relationship between EVs and renewable electricity-powered grids, fuel supply security, and indirect source regulation as paths forward to securing the environmental, public health, and economic gains of electrification.

Californians currently buy about one quarter zero-emission vehicles; even if antagonistic forces prevent state leaders from achieving a complete electrification transition by 2035 as envisioned, significant increases between 25 percent and 100 percent are still achievable. Every incremental gain that can be achieved along the way remains worthy. In response to Trump's signing of the CRA resolution last week, Governor Newsom issued an executive

order directing state agencies to examine new pathways to achieve the state's goals. Let's hope they embrace the full scope of benefits that electrification provides.