In the original proposal to eviscerate national car standards to reduce carbon pollution, the Trump Administration used a made-up justification: lower standards would lead to safer cars. Hence the Administration originally named the rollback of the standards the “SAFE” Rule. SAFE stands for “Safer Affordable Fuel Efficient” Vehicle Rule.

But the justification was a sham. Even though administration officials claimed that “the rule promises to save lives,” the math used in the original proposal to justify that claim - which would have frozen the standards at 2020 levels — simply doesn’t add up. The Trump Administration went back to the drawing board, issued a proposal that significantly weakens the Obama standards but doesn’t freeze them altogether and, virtually abandoned the safety justification. In fact, even the administration acknowledges that its new rule would pour almost a billion additional tons of carbon pollution into the atmosphere and make the air dirtier. But it kept the name “SAFE” anyway. Cara suggested that replacing SAFE with WORSE: Worsening Oil Reliance and Smog Everywhere (WORSE) Vehicles Rule would be more accurate. Another option, given that we seem to be stuck with the acronym SAFE, is to spell out what it actually means.

Since we now know that the safety justification was simply a makeweight to support the fossil fuel industry by making consumers drive cars that would guzzle more gas, I think we need a new phrase to justify the SAFE acronym. That’s because Sham Acronyms Foul the Environment. I’ve crowd-sourced some ideas and here are some replacement possibilities:

Selling our Atmosphere to Fossil Fuel Emitters
Sabotaging America’s Future Environment
S*@%ing on America’s Future Environment
Selling Autos for Easter
Sophistry About Fossil Enabling
Stinker Air for Everyone
Smoggier Air for Everyone
Specious Assumptions and Fraudulent Economics
Sloppy Analysis Feeds Entropy
Sorry About Future, Everybody!
Smog Acceleration From Evildoers and
Skip Arithmetic, F@#! Everyone
Surely Already F@#*ed Environment
Somehow Another Foolish Effrontery
Sh*tiest Administration F’s Up Everything
Such Abhorrent Fake Equivalences
Soon Apocalypse Fries Everyone
Safeguarding a Fossil-based Economy
Such a Fake Equivalency
Same A*%holes F-ing Everybody

The suggestions so far come from friends, neighbors, parents of my kids’ friends, law professors, family members, and colleagues. Add your own suggestions or give a shout out to your favorites in the comments section.