



April 23, 2026

Chris Spear
 President & CEO
 American Trucking Associations
 700 H Street NW
 Washington, DC 20001

Re: Why ATA’s Push to Weaken EPA Heavy-Duty Standards Hurts the Trucking Industry

Dear Mr. Spear:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations representing millions of Americans, we write to directly rebut claims made in the American Trucking Associations’ (ATA) [February 17, 2026, letter to US Environmental Protection Agency’s \(EPA\) Administrator Lee Zeldin.](#)

We represent environmental, public health, labor, and faith communities across the country. The ATA's request to weaken EPA's NOx rule is foremost a call for technological stagnation that would harm public health, burden truck drivers, and cede American market leadership to foreign competitors. While the ATA claims to protect trucking competitiveness, this agenda would slam the brakes on the industry's future success by locking fleets into dirtier, less efficient engines, and raising long-term costs for drivers and fleets during a period of spiking diesel costs and staggering price volatility.

ATA must end its efforts to weaken standards that protect the very drivers upon which the industry purports to serve.

Heavy-duty trucks are [a primary source of nitrogen oxides \(NOx\) and fine particulate matter \(PM2.5\)](#) that fuel asthma attacks, heart disease, strokes, and premature deaths, disproportionately harming communities living near highways, warehouses, and ports. The EPA's own data¹ projects the heavy-duty NOx rule will prevent thousands of premature deaths, hospital visits, and lost work/school days annually, delivering tens of billions of dollars in net benefits resulting from healthier workers and lower health costs.

The urgency of this transition to newer and cleaner technologies is underscored by the disproportionate impact of heavy-duty vehicles. While they represent just 6% of the on-road fleet, this vehicle class [accounts for 59% of the transportation sector's NOx emissions and 55% of the sector's particulate pollution](#). When the ATA calls for delays and loopholes, it prioritizes short-term excuses and profits over irrefutable health gains for truck drivers and families living along trucking routes.

Crucially, the ATA's position ignores the health of the very people who power the trucking industry. Truck drivers bear an immense health burden from diesel pollution, as pollution accumulates inside truck cabins, making them more likely to get seriously sick and die just for doing their jobs. The American Lung Association has found that ["in-cabin pollution"](#) contributes to [truck driving being among the occupations most heavily exposed to diesel exhaust](#), with correspondingly higher mortality rates from lung cancer than unexposed workforces. We urge the ATA to champion policies that protect truckers rather than prioritizing short-term decisions that come at the cost of their lives.

The ATA's warnings of "pre-buys," downtime, and supply chain chaos from "unproven" tech are belied by the reality of the global market. Manufacturers like Ford and Stellantis already produce and export vehicles with advanced filtration technology to Europe and China, where such standards have been in place for years. Furthermore, major manufacturers have already confirmed their readiness to meet the 2027 benchmarks. [PACCAR stated](#) on its Q3 2025 earnings call, "We're prepared for the 35mg NOx standard ... we're ready to go with it." [Cummins similarly committed](#) that under the 2027 regulations, "We'll be ready to launch our products into the market in 2027." [Daimler has confirmed](#) they already developed an engine that meets the 2027 heavy-duty NOx standard. Manufacturers have already publicly acknowledged

¹ Health benefits calculated using EPA's COBRA calendar year 2040 national incident-per-ton factors for PM, PM precursors, and ozone precursors. Uses the high mortality value.

their ability to comply with the standards, and therefore more recent claims that they cannot meet the standards are false.

The industry already has much of the cost-effective technology needed to comply with more protective standards. Core to the 2027 standards are evolutions of selective catalytic reduction (SCR) and aftertreatment systems, the same technologies manufacturers have used to meet [standards set 15 years ago](#). Past EPA and independent estimates demonstrate manufacturing costs for gasoline particulate filters (GPFs) ranging between [\\$50-184 per vehicle](#), with current costs likely decreasing.

History proves that the industry adapts and that past standards have spurred innovation and cut costs over time. Without strong clean air standards and a coordinated zero-emission transition, small and independent truckers will be stuck buying yesterday's technology while competitors in cleaner markets pull ahead. Modern trucking thrives on strong, predictable standards that cut pollution and open markets demanding low-emission freight. With volatile diesel prices and costs surging beyond \$5/gallon, the need for an affordable zero-emission transition to protect health and truckers' livelihoods is more urgent than ever.

We call on ATA to withdraw its request for weaker standards and instead champion full implementation of EPA's heavy-duty standards, for the sake of our economy, our drivers, and our communities.

Sincerely,

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