



COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY
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Statement by Chairman Andy Biggs (R-Ariz.)

Examining the Underlying Science and Impacts of Glider Truck Regulations

Chairman Biggs: Good morning and welcome to today's joint subcommittee hearing entitled "Examining the Underlying Science and Impacts of Glider Truck Regulations." Today, we will learn about glider trucks and the lack of sound science underlying the regulations in this industry.

For those who may not be familiar, a glider truck is a vehicle comprised of a newly constructed chassis, frame, and cab combined with a remanufactured engine and transmission system from an older vehicle. In October 2016, Obama's EPA and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration issued a rule requiring glider vehicles to meet the emissions standards for the year in which the vehicle is assembled, rather than the year in which the engine was manufactured.

Recognizing that this rule, which was slated to take full effect in January 2018, would have devastated the emerging glider kit industry, the Trump administration wisely pursued corrective action. In August of 2017, then-EPA Administrator Pruitt stated an intention to repeal the 2016 glider rule, which EPA officially proposed on November 16, 2017.

Four days later, on November 20, 2017, the National Vehicle and Fuel Emissions Laboratory (NVFEL) quietly published a study on gliders without notifying EPA leadership. It turns out that Volvo, which had previously supported efforts to increase glider regulations, began secretly working with the NVFEL in September of 2017 to conduct this study.

In July of this year, members of this committee sent a letter to Acting Administrator Andrew Wheeler asking for documents relating to this NVFEL study. Materials obtained by the Committee clearly show that Volvo, a regulated entity, initiated conversations with EPA employees in the NVFEL in an apparent effort to shape the outcome of the study by specifying test articles to use and laying out the schedule on which the test program should be conducted.

The NVFEL only consulted with Volvo and failed to reach out to glider manufacturers for the study. Furthermore, the NVFEL based its results on a small and inadequate sample size, only testing two glider trucks that were provided by Volvo. These facts call into question the integrity of the study.

The other disturbing fact about the NVFEL study is the timing and manner in which it was performed. Completing this study in November 2017, more than a year after the original rule became final and just two weeks before the public hearing on the proposed repeal of that 2016 rule, is highly suspect. Not informing anybody in EPA leadership about the study before, during, or after it was completed is also concerning. These circumstances demonstrate that there was no scientific foundation for the 2016 rule in the first place, and it demonstrates a clear intent to undermine the current administration's policy.

Accordingly, it is clear that the 2016 glider rule was politically driven. It makes no sense to require that gliders comply with standards of the year these trucks are assembled. It only serves to hurt small business and help large truck manufacturers.

It also discourages the development of innovative technology that help small businesses compete. Gliders salvage older model engines to create a truck that is affordable, reliable, and safe. Instead of throwing out older vehicle parts and creating more industrial waste, gliders allow old parts to be updated, recycled, and reused. To disregard the benefits of such innovation is an affront to hard working Americans who rely on these trucks to make a living.

Now is not the time to prevent creativity that could help sustain the trucking industry and our economy. Gliders allow for such innovation. Gliders reduce maintenance expenses, have better fuel efficiency, and cost about 25% less than a new truck. These benefits and cost savings allow small companies to allocate funds elsewhere, such as increasing salaries and hiring more drivers.

The science that underlies our regulations and policy should be unbiased and should consider all applicable parameters. This means doing the research and hearing from those who understand the industry the best. If the 2016 rule is not repealed, then we are setting a precedent for issuing harmful regulations without any proper scientific foundation.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today to learn more about this important issue.

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