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Stop carmakers evading pollution laws

Ensure all cars pollutant emissions are tested based on real driving conditions in Europe

The 'diesel gate' scandal has showed the lengths car manufacturers are willing to go to avoid pollution limiting laws in Europe and beyond. The Greens are pushing for a proper EU investigation of the scandal, with consequences for car makers found to have broken EU laws and for national authorities that did not implement them. But, we also want to ensure that there are no loopholes in the laws, which enable car manufacturers to place cars on the EU market even though they exceed the limits for health damaging pollutants (like Nitrogen Oxide or Particulate Matter). A crucial part of this is ensuring a proper testing procedure that measures car emissions based on real driving conditions.

Under current EU legislation, which sets the Euro 5/6 norms for pollutant limits from vehicles, the testing procedure for measuring pollutant emissions are carried out in the lab, and not based on how the cars actually perform when on our streets. As a result, many cars are approved for sale on the market despite having pollutant emissions many times above the legal limits, when they are being driven in real world driving conditions. This needs to change.

EU governments are currently considering a proposal from the European Commission for a new testing procedure for vehicle emissions. However, while the proposal is described as being a real driving emissions test, it includes exemptions which would mean cars could continue to be approved for the market even if they do not comply with the EU's pollutant limits. Under a so-called 'conformity factor', manufacturers would be allowed to market cars that exceed the limits by 50-60%, based on the current proposals. This makes no sense.

The Euro 5/6 pollutant limits were agreed in 2007. Car makers have had a long time to ensure their cars comply with these limits and many have, which shows that there is no technological barrier. It is wrong to punish those car makers that have invested in making cleaner cars. With air pollution, such a massive problem for public health, it is far worse to let car manufacturers off the hook for making their cars cleaner. We need a test cycle that is based on real driving emissions, with no exemptions.

EU governments will decide on this over the next weeks and we need your help to put pressure on yours to make sure new cars respect our pollution laws.

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