Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 3, 2026

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor
State of California
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Governor Newsom,

We strongly oppose the California Energy Commission's (CEC) attempt to restrict consumers to purchase only replacement tires that meet arbitrary CEC climate goals. This misguided policy will increase costs for families, limit consumer choice, and place additional burdens on drivers already struggling with California's high cost of living. Californians overwhelmingly reject this kind of overreach, and we urge your administration to immediately call upon the CEC to withdraw the proposed Replacement Tire Efficiency Program (RTEP).

This regulation fails to account for the economic realities facing Californians. CEC's action demands that consumers purchase more expensive replacement tires, citing fuel savings with questionable payback that may take years to offset the higher costs. California's climate and energy policies should be grounded in sound data and common sense, and the state must recognize that affordability is top of mind for California families.

The tire industry, including manufacturers, retailers, farmers, and automotive enthusiasts, has raised serious concerns about the impact of this regulation on consumers and the economy. The CEC's response that the regulation will raise replacement tire costs by $6 to $10 per tire and that consumers will quickly recoup those added expenses through fuel savings is indefensible. Tires capable of meeting rolling-resistance performance consistent with the proposed Phase 2 standard are typically priced hundreds of dollars more per set than baseline alternatives. When actual market pricing is considered, the modest fuel savings projected by your administration are insufficient to offset the increased upfront costs.

The proposed regulation would also dramatically reduce the choices available to California drivers, eliminating 70 percent of current tire offerings in the state by 2033. Consumers have different needs and priorities when selecting tires. Many are willing to pay a premium for fuel-efficient or low-rolling-resistance tires when the benefits align with their driving needs and budgets. Others prioritize longevity, traction, or affordability. A one-size-fits-all mandate ignores these differences and takes important purchasing decisions out of the hands of consumers.

There is also a legitimate concern that the regulation could result in more frequent tire replacement. If tires that meet the new efficiency standards have shorter lifespans under certain conditions, consumers would be forced to replace them more often, further eroding any projected fuel savings while increasing total transportation costs. More frequent tire replacement would also result in additional scrap tire waste, undermining California's waste reduction goals by increasing the volume of tires entering CalRecycle's disposal and recycling streams.

Additionally, the fuel savings associated with improvements in rolling resistance are modest, generally resulting in only a one- to two-percent improvement in fuel economy. Under real-world road conditions, those gains can be further diminished by factors such as driving behavior, proper tire inflation and wear, and maintenance practices. Californians should not be required to pay significantly more upfront based on theoretical savings that may never materialize.

These added expenses come at a time when Californians are already struggling with the high cost of living. From housing and transportation to insurance, gas, and food, prices have increased substantially under your administration. By materially increasing the cost of replacement tires, the proposed standards would impose hundreds of dollars in new upfront expenses—costs that disproportionately affect working families, rural residents, seniors on fixed incomes, and lower-income households that often have longer commutes and fewer transportation alternatives. For many families, vehicle-related costs are the second-largest household expense after housing. Replacement tires are not a discretionary purchase—they are a necessary safety expense that is essential to getting to work, taking children to school, going to the grocery store, and meeting basic needs.

This regulation would also likely pose a significant challenge to interstate commerce as most of the U.S. market is not currently meeting California's new RTEP standard. By increasing production costs on tire manufacturers, we have strong concerns about the future impact on purchasers across the nation.

In support of consumers, we respectfully urge you to call upon the California Energy Commission to immediately pause finalization of the Replacement Tire Efficiency Program and withdraw the rulemaking package from the Office of Administrative Law if it has already been submitted.

Sincerely,

David G. Valadao
Member of Congress

James Gallagher
Member of Congress

Kevin Kiley
Member of Congress

Tom McClintock
Member of Congress

Young Kim
Member of Congress

Vince Fong
Member of Congress

Jay Obernolte
Member of Congress

Darrell Issa
Member of Congress

Ken Calvert
Member of Congress