Trump administration reverses decades of policy, says conserving oil no longer an economic imperative
Conserving oil is no longer an economic imperative for the U.S., the Trump administration declares in a major new policy statement that threatens to undermine decades of government campaigns for gas-thrifty cars and other conservation programs.

The position was outlined in a memo released last month in support of the administration’s proposal to relax fuel mileage standards. The government released the memo online this month without fanfare.

Growth of natural gas and other alternatives to petroleum has reduced the need for imported oil, which “in turn affects the need of the nation to conserve energy,” the Energy Department said. It also cites the now decade-old fracking revolution that has unlocked U.S. shale oil reserves, giving “the United States more flexibility than in the past to use our oil resources with less concern.”

With the memo, the administration is formally challenging old justifications for conservation — even congressionally prescribed ones, as with the mileage standards. The memo made no mention of climate change. Transportation is the single largest source of climate-changing emissions.

Opinion

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