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THE FUTURE'S ELECTRIC —

## Germany's Bundesrat votes to ban the internal combustion engine by 2030

The resolution is non-binding, but it's still a powerful signal.

JONATHAN M. GITLIN - 10/11/2016, 12:46 AM

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Is the tide turning for the internal combustion engine? In Germany, things are starting to look that way. This is the country that invented the technology, but late last week, the Bundesrat (the federal council of all 16 German states) **voted to ban gasoline- and diesel-powered vehicles** by 2030.

It's a strong statement in a nation where the auto industry is one of the largest sectors of the economy; Germany produces more automobiles than any other country in Europe and is the third largest in the world.

The resolution passed by the Bundesrat calls on the European Commission (the executive arm of the European Union) to "evaluate the recent tax and contribution practices of Member States on their effectiveness in promoting zero-emission mobility," which many are taking to mean an end to the lower levels of tax currently levied on diesel fuel across Europe.

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Europe bet big on diesel, [something that now seems increasingly misguided](#) with continuing revelations about companies cheating their emissions tests and the growing awareness of the health implications of diesel particulates.

The resolution—which passed with support from both sides of the German political spectrum—is non-binding, so this isn't a sure thing, but it's evidence of a trend that has been gathering steam in Europe with increasingly tough emissions laws and [moves by individual cities](#) to restrict the use of fossil-fuel powered vehicles.

Whether German (and other European) automakers take this move lying down or lobby hard to fight it is as yet unclear. But the [big three](#) German car makers have all been making increasingly loud noises signaling a commitment to going electric.

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If you read [the actual resolution](#), it's a bit more complex:

(I'll summarize, since it's in German)

It's a reply to [this EU document from the summer](#), and it basically states the Bundesrat's ideas and suggestions about the subject matter. (EDIT: As [nannos points out in a comment further down](#), this document is merely a letter with suggestions for the EU commission and doesn't ban anything, since that'd be beyond the power of the Bundesrat)

1. Since it's impossible to make industry and agriculture emission-free by 2050, the goal should be to get to **zero-emission mobility by 2050**, to be achieved in a way that doesn't endanger EU prosperity.
2. EU should be "de-carbonised"(??? carbon-neutral, I guess...) by 2050
3. This should be connected to noise-reduction efforts
4. A mix of tax strategies and financial incentives should be used to make **all newly registered cars zero-emission by 2030**.
5. It's important to look at emissions from railroads and ships, as well.
6. There should be subsidies for public transportation, and car or bike sharing.

The rest is detailed stuff about asking the federal government to influence certain related EU regulations in a way that's most practical for Germany.

TL;DR: They suggest that new cars (it specifically states that it's only about cars, not buses or trucks) shouldn't have ICEs by 2030 and that all road traffic should be zero-emission by

2050.

Interesting tidbit: The German state of Niedersachsen has a large stake in Volkswagen. If they backed this paper, it's a safe assumption that VW is doubling-down on its zero-emission vehicles after the whole Diesel fiasco.

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