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The Impact of Emissions-Based Taxes on the Retirement of Used and Inefficient Vehicles: The Case of Switzerland^{*}

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Abstract

Previous evaluations of emissions-based car taxes have estimated their impact on the shares or sales of new vehicles. In contrast, we ask whether taxes that penalize high emitters induce changes in the retirement of existing and inefficient vehicles. We exploit natural experiment conditions in Switzerland to analyze the impact of three different “bonus”/“malus” annual registration fee schemes implemented at the cantonal level. In the three schemes, the bonus rewards new, fuel-efficient vehicles. The malus is retroactive in canton Obwalden, i.e. it is charged on both new and existing high-emitting cars, but prospective in Geneva and Ticino. We

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