



Consumer Federation of America

**PRESS RELEASE
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NEW CFA REPORT: CONSUMER ENERGY COSTS SKYROCKET *STRONG SUPPORT FOR CONGRESSIONAL ACTION, POLL SHOWS*

Washington, D.C.— As the price of oil rockets past \$90 a barrel, consumers face the energy crunch on two fronts: typical winter relief at the gas pump is nowhere in sight, while home heating costs are increasing. A new report from the Consumer Federation of America (CFA), http://www.consumerfed.org/pdfs/No_Time_To_Waste.pdf, details the alarming costs that consumers and the country are bearing as America's energy situation deteriorates. CFA also released a new poll revealing deep concern among consumers about the worsening energy situation and strong support for three key policies to begin addressing it, including higher passenger vehicle fuel economy standards, the purchase of renewable energy by electric utilities and increased production of biofuels.

“While politicians keep important solutions to our urgent energy problems bottled up in Washington, consumers are paying the price,” said Mark Cooper, author of “No Time to Waste,” an economic analysis of three energy provisions passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate. “Our analysis is that the public has good reason to support these policies.”

Report findings include:

- Over the last five years, household energy expenditures (home heating and gasoline) have nearly doubled, and are now 50 percent more than health care expenditures and 23 percent more than spending on food.
- America's energy situation has deteriorated dramatically over the past two decades increasing our reliance on hostile nations, and vulnerability to price spikes while U.S. energy policy has remained stagnant, failing to address these urgent problems.
- Three key energy provisions bottled up in Washington could save consumers more than \$180 billion between now and 2020.
- Substitute amendment backed by the automobile lobby would achieve only one-quarter of the oil savings provided by the Senate-approved fuel economy provision, which translates into a delay of two vital decades.

“The direct consumer pocketbook savings are the largest benefit, but national security and environmental benefits are substantial as well,” Cooper added. “Taken together, the value of these policies would be well over \$400 billion between now and 2020.”

The report finds that the public understands the nation's dire energy circumstances and supports urgent and aggressive action to address the problem, according to CFA consumer attitude research, undertaken by Opinion Research Corporation in October. Survey findings include:

- Concern over U.S. dependence on oil from the Middle East has grown dramatically and now almost equals concern about prices. 76 percent of respondents express concern over imports (56 percent express great concern). This is almost equal to the 78 percent who express concern about prices (63 percent express great concern).
- An overwhelming majority (84 percent) support three requirements in Congressional energy legislation: 1) higher fuel economy standards for passenger vehicles; 2) the purchase of renewable energy by electric utilities, and 3) expanded production of biofuels.
- An overwhelming majority (75 percent) still supports these proposals after hearing arguments from opponents of the legislation.
- Opposition to these policies is meager (between 13 and 22 percent).

“Efforts to weaken or block these policies waste the most critical asset we have to solve our complex energy problem – time,” Cooper concluded. “Consumers and the nation cannot afford the ‘go low and slow’ approach being pushed by the auto manufacturers and electric utilities.”

For a complete report go to http://www.consumerfed.org/pdfs/No_Time_To_Waste.pdf.

CFA is a non-profit association of 300 pro-consumer groups that was founded in 1968 to advance the consumer interest through research, education, and advocacy