



PRESS RELEASE
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**NEW ANALYSIS AND POLL: CONSUMER NEEDS & DEMAND
ALIGN WITH 54.5 STANDARD**

Consumer protection & savings realized as automotive trends, public opinion, & national standards all align, fuel economy increases at fastest pace since the '70s

WASHINGTON — A new analysis from the [Consumer Federation of America \(CFA\)](#) shows that passenger vehicle fuel economy and emissions standards, to be finalized this summer, align with consumer demands and needs. The report examines historical and current day mileage and pricing data as well as new polling data to determine what consumers want and need, whether or not the auto industry can deliver on those needs, and whether or not fuel economy improvements will be cost prohibitive. Bottom line: New standards, consumer demand and auto industry innovation is driving the creation of a more efficient, cost-effective automotive fleet.

“The 54.5 mpg by 2025 standard will be one of the most important consumer protection measures to be adopted in decades,” said Dr Mark Cooper, Director of Research for CFA, an association of nearly 300 nonprofit consumer advocacy organizations across the nation. “Record spending on gasoline for American families, combined with consumer demand for better mileage and a broad political consensus over higher national standards, are driving faster improvements in fuel economy than at any time since the oil price shocks of the 1970s.”

New Poll Results: Consumer Support for Fuel Economy Standards Strong

New CFA polling data finds there is continued strong consumer support for the standards. Top findings of the telephone poll of 1,000 adults, conducted in May 2012 with a plus or minus three-point margin of error, include:

- 88 percent of those surveyed said the U.S. should reduce oil consumption. CFA found that the belief that the U.S. should cut back on oil consumption is associated with the desire for higher fuel economy. Respondents who said cutting oil consumption is very important want to get five more miles per gallon with their next vehicle purchase.
- 74 percent of those polled said the new fuel economy standards are a good idea.
- 66 percent said they would still support the standard, even if it creates higher sticker prices for vehicles.
- 86 percent said cutting consumer costs is an important reason to cut oil consumption.



Respondents reported that for their next car purchase, they intend to buy a vehicle that gets about seven miles-per-gallon more than their current vehicle. Additionally, based on the polling, CFA notes that having a more fuel-efficient vehicle tends to reinforce consumer preference for higher fuel economy in the future.

“It is clear that consumers have a growing appetite for fuel economy,” said Cooper. “As more fuel-efficient vehicles penetrate the market, I fully expect the preference for even higher fuel economy to strengthen.”

Analysis: Costs Vs. Consumer Benefits of Fuel Economy Technology

CFA’s new analysis of the costs versus consumer benefits of fuel economy technology shows that choosing more fuel-efficient cars consistently pays off for consumers. Using Bureau of Labor Statistics data on car prices, CFA examined how much improvements in fuel economy technology in a number of different vehicles of different sizes and classes have historically cost car buyers. CFA then compared this cost data to the savings consumers have enjoyed on gasoline costs due to increased fuel economy.

“In every case, for a variety of models, the savings from spending less on gas far outweighed the additional cost of buying a more fuel-efficient vehicle,” said Jack Gillis, Director of Public Affairs for CFA and author of *The Car Book*. “The results demonstrate that fuel economy is an investment that pays off many times over for consumers.”

The analysis found that a Chevy Malibu’s improvements in fuel economy over the past decade have increased the sticker price **\$348** compared to the 2002 price. But the typical owner who keeps the car for six years will save **\$2,885** in fuel costs. This translates into gasoline savings more than eight times the cost of new fuel economy technology. Similarly, a Ford F-150 pickup costs \$950 more than it did in 2002 due to fuel economy improvements. The analysis found that the owner would save \$5,369 in fuel costs, coming out \$4419 ahead.

“Household gasoline expenditures set a record last year, reaching an average of over \$2,850 annually. The consumer damage caused gas prices in recent years has been unique and unprecedented,” said Cooper. “Ten years ago, the cost of the vehicle itself was the largest single component of the cost of driving. Now, gassing up your vehicle is. This is why fuel economy is so important to consumers.”

CFA also analyzed the cost versus benefit of today’s consumer choosing a more fuel-efficient car or truck. CFA compared pairs of similar current models in which one of the models was priced higher due to its advanced fuel efficiency technology.

For example:



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- A Chevrolet Cruze costs \$225 more than a Volkswagen Jetta, but gets 4 more miles per gallon. The annual fuel cost savings for the Cruze driver would be \$234 annually, with a break-even point at 0.96 years.
- A Scion iQ costs \$55 more than a Mazda 2, but gets 5 more miles per gallon. The annual fuel cost savings for the Scion driver would be \$235, with a break-even point at 0.23 years.
- A Honda Civic costs \$110 more than a Mitsubishi Lancer, but gets 4.5 more miles per gallon. The annual fuel costs savings for the Civic driver would be \$243, with a break-even point at a little under three months.

“In every case, the initial cost premium for better fuel economy technology was more than offset by fuel cost savings—and the break-even point came within the first two years of ownership,” said Gillis.

Fuel Economy Enjoys Broad Support, Automakers Respond

Pain at the pump, along with concern over the country’s dependence on imported oil, has produced a broad consensus for higher fuel economy standards that spans the political spectrum.

Automakers are already responding with more fuel-efficient cars. CFA finds that the number of passenger cars and trucks getting over 30 mpg has more than quadrupled in the past 5 years, increasing from 12 models to 52.

“It is no coincidence that we start to see vast improvements in fuel economy in 2008 after years of stagnation,” said Gillis. “At that point in time, automakers knew that these higher standards were coming and they knew that they needed to respond by putting out a better, more efficient, more cost-effective product.”

As the federal government prepares to finalize the 54.5-mpg rule this summer, automakers and auto workers, as well as consumer, health, national security and environmental experts stand together in support of the new standards.

“Economically and politically, this rule is a win-win. CFA looks forward to the adoption of 54.5 mpg by 2025. It will be a historic achievement that that will benefit our nation,” said Cooper.

The CFA report can be found at:

www.consumerfed.org/pdfs/Studies.CooperHigherFuelEconomy.7-7.pdf

The Consumer Federation of America is an association of nearly 300 nonprofit consumer organizations that was established in 1968 to advance the consumer interest through research, advocacy, and education.