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THE CASE FOR HIGHER VEHICLE FUEL-EFFICIENCY STANDARDS NOW

*Major Climate Benefits Seen ...
The Technology Exists ...
Americans Want More Fuel-Efficient Vehicles ...*

A Report by
The Civil Society Institute
and 40MPG.org

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OVERVIEW

"The best research available demonstrates that Americans can have greater fuel efficiency right now. It also argues that great leaps can be made in the future. These advances can be accomplished without increasing risks to motorists, raising prices at the pump, or sacrificing jobs; in fact, a few simple technological fixes could actually result in substantial job gains."

-- "Life in the Slow Lane: Tracking Decades of Automaker Roadblocks to Fuel Economy," Union of Concerned Scientists, July 2003

Today, even as Detroit's Big 3 and Toyota launch an astonishingly short-sighted advertising campaign to lobby the American public against improved fuel efficiency, it is time for Americans to face the facts: Our nation is needlessly losing the race to develop the best fuel-efficient vehicle technology and then deliver it to American consumers, who, contrary to rumor, want to purchase these vehicles that would save them money, curb our dangerous addiction to Middle Eastern oil, and also create less global-warming pollution.

Even as Congress considers a go-ahead-slow bill to gradually raise federal fuel efficiency standards to 35 mpg-by-2018 -- about a year later than what has been proposed under a much more complicated program suggested by President Bush -- Europe, China and Asia are all on track to achieve 35-40 mpg during **this** decade. A focus on 40 mpg-by-2010 would mean:

* 58 percent of vehicles on the road are 40 mpg-by-2018 versus only about 11 percent under the 35 mpg-by-2018 approach.

* Total U.S. vehicle carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions under the 35 mpg-by-2018 plan would drop only 3 percent by 2018 from 2010 levels ... versus a 14 percent drop under the 40 mpg-by-2010 plan. The 40 mpg approach would take 2.4 trillion more pounds of CO₂ emissions out of the air than the go-ahead-slow approach.

* The 40 mpg-by-2010 plan would more than wipe out by 2018 the equivalent of America's current dependence on Middle Eastern oil. Oil consumption in 2018 would drop by 16 percent (under 40 mpg-by-2010) versus 3 percent (35 mpg-by-2018).

* Based on a \$3-a-gallon gas price, consumers would save \$246 billion more at the pump from 2011 through 2018 under the 40 mpg-by-2010 approach than under the much more gradual 35 mpg-by-2018 approach.

The good news is that these more fuel-efficient vehicles are already on the road in other nations, but not in the United States. In fact, the Europeans, Japanese and Chinese currently are achieving far more aggressive MPG standards than are even being considered for *10 years* from now in the United States! Congress needs to show leadership now and insist on a 40 miles-per-gallon standard now – not a decade from now when it will be too late to save Detroit from its worst impulses.

In addition to saving existing jobs and creating new jobs, America can slash its dangerous reliance on imported Middle Eastern oil, save consumers billions of dollars, and also dramatically reduce global warming pollution if we move to a 40 mpg standard now – rather than waiting until 2017 or 2018 to achieve lower mile-per-gallon goals.

MAJOR CLIMATE BENEFITS SEEN

More than 100 members of Congress have co-sponsored a bill¹ that would result in gradually raising federal fuel efficiency standards to 35 mpg by 2018, about a year later than what has been proposed under a much more complicated program suggested by President Bush. Both of these plans would freeze the United States in its current posture of lagging far behind Europe, China and Asia – all of which are on track to achieve 35-40 mpg during **this** decade.

According to testimony offered on Capitol Hill by Dr. Walter McManus, director of the Automotive Analysis Division at the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute on May 1, 2007, if we had not enacted the original CAFE standards in 1975, we would be much worse off than we are now. "Without CAFE standards, we would be using an additional 80 billion gallons of gasoline on top of the 140 billion gallons we will use this year. That would represent an increase in oil demand by 5.2 million barrels of oil per day or a 25 percent increase in our oil addiction. At today's average price for gasoline, about \$2.50 per gallon, that represents \$200 billion dollars saved."² This shows what a major and beneficial impact increasing fuel economy standards could have.

A stark picture emerges from a CSI data analysis of the 40 mpg-by-2010 approach (in line with non-U.S. standards) and 35 mpg-by-2018 approach (an extension of the American go-ahead-slow style):

* The 40 mpg-by-2010 approach would mean 58 percent of vehicles on the road are 40 mpg by 2018 versus only about 11 percent under the 35 mpg-by-2018 approach – a level that reflects the impact of market forces, since the 35 mpg-by-2018 approach would never actually get around to imposing a fleet-wide 40 mpg average requirement.

* Total U.S. vehicle CO2 emissions under the 35 mpg-by-2018 plan would drop only 3 percent by 2018 from 2010 levels ... versus a 15 percent drop under the 40 mpg-by-2010 plan. The 40 mpg approach would take 2.4 trillion more pounds of CO2 emissions out of the air than the go-ahead-slow approach. Looked at differently, the total extra CO2 reductions from 2010-2018 under the 40 mpg-by-2010 approach would be the equivalent of wiping

¹ U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Energy and Commerce, To increase fuel economy standards for automobiles, and for other purposes, Representative Edward J. Markey, H.R. 1506, < <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d110:h1506> : >(18 May 2007).

² Committee on Senate Finance, Subcommittee on Energy, Natural Resources, and Infrastructure, Advanced Technology Vehicles: Statement of Dr. Walter McManus, Director, Automotive Analysis Division, University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute, 1 May 2007, page 2.

out the vast majority (84 percent) of vehicle-related CO2 emissions in the single year of 2005.

* The 40 mpg-by-2010 plan would more than wipe out by 2018 the equivalent of America's current dependence on Middle Eastern oil. Right now, America imports about 1.127 billion barrels of Middle Eastern oil each year. The 40 mpg-by-2010 approach would cut oil consumption in 2018 by more than that amount -- 1.2 trillion barrels -- compared to 2010 consumption levels. By contrast, the 35 mpg-by-2018 plan would save much less oil: 227 million barrels a year compared to 2010 levels. The difference between the approaches is the difference between cutting 2018 oil consumption by 16 percent (under 40 mpg-by-2010) versus 3 percent (35 mpg-by-2018).

* Based on a conservative gasoline price of \$3 per gallon, consumers would save \$246,004,789,044 more at the pump from 2011 through 2018 under the 40 mpg-by-2010 approach than under the much more gradual 35 mpg-by-2018 approach.

Will America get with the rest of the world and significantly improve its vehicle fuel-efficiency standard?

Timidity, half measures and kowtowing to the self-destructive titans in Detroit will not get the job done for America. Compared to a 40 mpg-by-2010 approach that is consistent with non-U.S. fuel-efficiency standards, the much slower 35 mpg-by-2018 approach would mean significantly fewer fuel-efficient vehicles on the road, far greater reliance on Middle Eastern oil imports, only modestly reduced greenhouse gas emissions linked to global warming, and much higher costs to consumers.

THE TECHNOLOGY ALREADY EXISTS

As Memorial Day 2007 neared, Detroit's Big 3 were joined by Toyota in launching a major advertising and Web blitz in favor of bigger and more fuel-inefficient cars.³ The goal of the campaign is to derail efforts on Capitol Hill for what are actually modest and slow-moving improvements in MPG standards.

"This misinformation campaign is akin to a drug pusher telling people that cutting their addiction is bad for their health," said David Friedman, research director for the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) Clean Vehicles Program. "Automakers are not giving consumers the 34 mpg SUVs, the 37 mpg minivans and the 41 mpg family cars our nation's top engineers and scientists can deliver, according to the National Academy of Sciences."⁴

The notion that highly fuel-efficient cars don't exist in the commercial marketplace or that there is no market for such vehicles in the U.S. are the twin myths that Detroit has continued to rely on to its own detriment. In reality, these fuel-sipping vehicles are already on the road elsewhere around the world – but not here in the United States.

This is a major issue because of how much oil American autos consume. The stakes are huge: Vehicles are the source of 20 percent of the greenhouse gas emissions from the United States and 40 percent of our oil dependency.⁵

As a report from the Government Accountability Office states: "... the transportation sector is by far the largest U.S. consumer of petroleum, accounting for two-thirds of all U.S. consumption and relying almost entirely on petroleum to operate. Within the transportation sector, light vehicles are the largest consumers of petroleum energy, accounting for approximately 60 percent of the transportation sector's consumption of petroleum-based energy in the United States."⁶

What does not exist today is the will in Congress and in Detroit to raise federal fuel-efficiency standards to the much higher level that is technologically achievable today. The sad fact is that federal fuel efficiency

³ David Shepardson, "Ad blitz pans new fuel rules," Detroit News, 24 May 2007, <<http://www.detnews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070524/AUTO01/705240377>> (30 May 2007).

⁴ Union of Concerned Scientists, "Automakers Summer Prescription For American Drivers: Higher Gas Prices, More Pollution," 24 May 2007, < http://www.ucsusa.org/news/press_release/automakers-summer-0034.html > (30 May 2007).

⁵ Committee on Senate Finance, page 1.

⁶ U.S. Government Accountability Office, Crude Oil: Uncertainty about Future Oil Supply Makes It Important to Develop a Strategy for Addressing a Peak and Decline in Oil Production, Publication No. GAO-07-283, February 2007, pages 9-10.

standards for cars have not changed since 1990. Even though the fuel economy standards for trucks were bumped modestly last year, the fuel-efficiency standard for cars has been stuck for 17 years at 27.5 miles per gallon.⁷

The reverse is true outside of the United States. As Automotive News reported on February 5, 2007: "The European Union is moving toward mandatory standards that will replace voluntary targets for limiting vehicle greenhouse-gas emissions ... Those targets would produce fleet fuel economy equivalent to more than 40 mpg, according to a study done for the nonprofit Pew Center on Global Climate Change. Japan already has rules requiring fleet fuel economy equivalent to more than 45 mpg, the study says. And China's rules will require the equivalent of about 37 mpg by 2008."

The article continues: "In any case, the United States - which began lamenting its dependence on imported oil in the 1970s - is trailing the pack in fuel economy. And the United States, with a truck standard this year of 22.2 mpg and a car standard of 27.5 mpg, would remain behind even if the federal government were to adopt increases of 4 percent a year through 2017, as suggested by President Bush last month in his State of the Union speech."⁸

Additionally, looking forward, standards for the future in these countries will continue to increase fuel-efficiency requirements. For Japan, the equivalent of 48 mpg will be required by 2010, for the European Union, the equivalent of 44.2 mpg by 2008 and for China, the equivalent of 36.7 by 2008.⁹

In short, the rest of the world is leaving the United States further and further behind on vehicle fuel-efficiency standards.

⁷ Department of Transportation, "CAFÉ Overview-Frequently Asked Questions," <<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/rules/cape/overview.htm>> (25 April 2007).

⁸ Harry Stoffer, "Other nations push tougher standards," *Automotive News*, 5 February 2007, <<http://www.autonews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070205/FREE/70201062&SearchID=73279246873030>> (26 April 2007).

⁹ Feng An and Amanda Sauer, "Comparison of Passenger Vehicle Fuel Economy and Greenhouse Gas Emission Standards Around the World." *Pew Center on Global Climate Change*, December 2004, page 24.

COMPARISON OF FUEL ECONOMY STANDARDS BY NATION

Region	2002 fleet fuel economy averages for new vehicles		Future fleet average fuel economy average for new vehicles	
	mpg normalized by CAFE test cycle (Steps 1-3)	mpg – not normalized by test cycle (Step 1 only)	mpg normalized by CAFE test cycle (Steps 1-3)	mpg – not normalized by test cycle (Step 1 only)
United States	24.1	24.1	24.3 by 2005	24.3 by 2005
			24.6 by 2006	24.6 by 2006
			24.9 by 2007	24.9 by 2007
California	25.4	25.4	25.0 by 2009	25.0 by 2009
			25.9 by 2010	25.9 by 2010
			28.4 by 2011	28.4 by 2011
			31.8 by 2012	31.8 by 2012
			32.6 by 2013	32.6 by 2013
			33.2 by 2014	33.2 by 2014
			34.4 by 2015	34.4 by 2015
35.6 by 2016	35.6 by 2016			
Canada	25.6	25.6	32.0 by 2010 (proposed)	32.0 by 2010 (proposed)
European Union	37.2	32.9	44.2 by 2008	39.2 by 2008
			51.5 by 2012 (proposed)	45.6 by 2012 (proposed)
Japan	46.3	34.3	48.0 by 2010	35.6 by 2010
Australia	29.1	25.3	34.4 by 2010	29.9 by 2010
China	29.3	25.9	34.4 by 2005	30.4 by 2005
			36.7 by 2008	32.5 by 2008

Feng An and Amanda Sauer, "Comparison of Passenger Vehicle Fuel Economy and Greenhouse Gas Emission Standards Around the World." Pew Center on Global Climate Change, December 2004, page 26.

How big is the gap already? As the Civil Society Institute and its 40MPG.org project reported on February 14, 2007: "America is now stuck in reverse when it comes to fuel-efficient vehicles ... In an update of its own December 2005 research, CSI/40MPG.org found that the number of vehicles sold in the U.S. that achieve combined gas mileage of at least 40 miles per gallon (MPG) has dropped from five in 2005 to just two in 2007, while the ranks of such vehicles available overseas -- but not sold in the U.S. -- rose from 86 to 113 in the same time period."¹⁰

The report continued: "Adding insult to injury, nearly two thirds (74 or 65 percent) of the 113 highly fuel-efficient car models that are unavailable to American consumers are either made by U.S. auto manufacturers (e.g., Ford

¹⁰ For the full CSI/40MPG.org "fuel-efficient car gap" chart, go to http://www.40mpg.org/pdfs/021407_fuel_efficient_vehicle_gap.xls.

and GM) or foreign manufacturers with substantial U.S. sales operations (e.g., Volkswagen, Nissan and Toyota)."

Other key findings of the CSI/40MPG.org research from February 2007 on the "fuel-efficient car gap" included the following:

- * Outside of the U.S., there are 38 vehicles that get 50 mpg or better and 34 of them use "clean diesel" technology. Only two U.S. vehicles (the Toyota Prius and the Honda Civic Hybrid) are rated by the EPA as having 50 mpg or better combined fuel efficiency.

- * Overall, at least 161 vehicles not sold in the U.S. were found to achieve combined fuel efficiency of 35 mpg or better, up sharply from 129 in 2005. In the U.S., the number of vehicles getting 35 mpg or better fell from nine to six.¹¹

What about the notion that the American love affair with trucks will always hold down overall fuel-efficiency levels in this nation?

The good news is that we already have the technology to beat that problem: A 2002 report by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) observed that technologies available to automakers could justify a substantial increase in light truck CAFE standards. Though the NAS report did not make a specific recommendation, it found that existing technologies could add as much as 12–14 mpg to cars and 11–13 mpg to trucks.¹²

And how about Detroit's argument that smaller, more fuel-efficient cars are somehow less safe?

According to the Union of Concerned Scientists: "An average 35-mpg fleet can be reached while maintaining or improving safety. Studies by Oakridge National Labs, Lawrence Berkeley National Labs, the University of Michigan and Dynamics Research Inc. demonstrate that fuel economy is not linked with increased fatalities. They also found that large vehicles do not have lower fatality rates compared to smaller vehicles, and increased weight is actually associated with *increased* fatalities."¹³

¹¹ Some fuel-efficient vehicles identified by CSI/40MPG.org have both a diesel and a gas model over 40 mpg that aren't sold in U.S. In other cases, some models have a gas version available in the U.S., but also offer a more fuel-efficient diesel version outside the U.S. "Clean" diesels are expected to become more widely sold in the United States during 2007 and 2008, in compliance with relevant federal and state pollution standards.

¹² Committee on the Effectiveness and Impact of Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) Standards, National Research Council, "Effectiveness and Impact of Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) Standards," 2002, <http://books.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=10172#description> (25 April 2007).

¹³ Union of Concerned Scientists, "Automakers Summer Prescription For American Drivers: Higher Gas Prices, More Pollution," 24 May 2007, < http://www.ucsusa.org/news/press_release/automakers-summer-0034.html > (30 May 2007).

And what about the auto industry's claims that more fuel-efficient vehicles would be more expensive for consumers?

In testimony before the U.S. Senate in 2001, the Union of Concerned Scientists noted: "Estimates from a study released by the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy (ACEE), by DeCicco et. al., indicate that a combination of these technologies, along with mass reductions targeted at the heaviest vehicles, can produce a fleet of cars and trucks that averages over 40 miles per gallon ... The result is an increase in fuel economy of over 70 percent and a net saving to the average consumer of over \$2,000."

The UCS testimony continues: "Increasing fuel economy standards results in a win-win situation where consumers and the environment are both better off. In this case, fuel economy standards result in a net cost of carbon dioxide reduction of -\$49/ton of carbon dioxide avoided, in other words, consumers are paid to reduce their impacts on the environment while at the same time we are reducing our oil dependence ..."

The UCS testimony also stated that on balance consumers will save money with more fuel-efficient vehicles: "We have compared the UCS/ACEE fuel economy results with those from the recent National Research Council report and we find that the costs and improvements in fuel economy are very similar ... we estimate that a fleet fuel economy of 33 to 47 mpg could be reached at a retail price increase of about \$1,700 to \$3,800 per vehicle. This compares favorably to UCS/ACEE estimates of a fleet fuel economy of 36-49 mpg at retail price increase of about \$1,200 to \$3,900. In both cases, consumers would be saving thousands of dollars at the gas pump. In most cases, this would be more than enough to pay for the cost of the fuel economy improvements, resulting in a net savings to consumers."¹⁴

And those are only the direct benefits to consumers of more fuel-efficient vehicles. One estimate is that nearly 182,700 net jobs would be created in the construction, auto service, retail and other industries by raising federal fuel-efficiency standards to 40 mpg by 2012.¹⁵

Dr. Walter McManus pointed out in his Capitol Hill testimony that higher fuel economy means higher profits for automakers and more jobs. "In July 2004

¹⁴ U.S. Senate, "Union of Concerned Scientists Statement before the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation," 106th Congress," 2001, <<http://commerce.senate.gov/hearings/120601Friedman.pdf>> (April 25, 2007).

¹⁵ Union of Concerned Scientists, "Raising Fuel Economy Standards Could Create 182,700 Jobs in Construction, Automobile, Service, Retail, and Other Industries," 20 February 2002, <http://www.ucsusa.org/news/press_release/raising-fuel-economy-standards-could-create-182700-jobs-in-construction-automobile-service-retail-and-other-industries.html> (25 April 2007).

(before Katrina and spike in oil), UMTRI predicted that if fuel prices went over \$3/gallon that Detroit would lose \$11 billion in profits. Detroit media ignored the story, and Detroit automaker's denied it...But when fuel prices spiked two years later, Detroit lost more than \$20 billion. The only thing wrong with our analysis was that we underestimated the extent of losses. As a result, Detroit is not in the painful process of dramatic downsizing, closing plants, laying off workers. And a new wave of large SUVs and trucks are facing difficulties in the market."

Dr. McManus also states: "UMTRI also released another study recently that shows if U.S. automakers increased their energy efficiency to accommodate increasingly conservation-minded customers, they could collectively increase profitability by \$2 billion in model year 2010. Following their current plans, we concluded, they are projected to lose \$3.6 billion that year...The dilemma the Detroit automakers face is that while they may believe they cannot afford to make fuel economy a high priority, in actuality, it turns out they cannot afford not to."¹⁶

In short, the United States stays on the sidelines of the federal fuel-efficiency "game" and loses jobs as automakers in other nations (e.g., Japan's Toyota) grow by leaps and bounds as they put the fuel-efficient technology to work for them.

¹⁶ Committee on Senate Finance, page 5.

AMERICANS WANT MORE FUEL-EFFICIENT VEHICLES

One of the most commonly voiced objections to higher federal fuel-efficiency standards in the U.S. is the myth that American consumers do not want to buy more fuel-efficient vehicles. Here, we see the danger of relying on the “common wisdom” on a topic that is readily tested through the science of opinion survey research.

Why would consumers want to keep paying more than they have to in order to drive their cars and other vehicles? The toll of fuel-inefficient vehicles is stunning: U.S. consumers paid \$38 billion more for gasoline in the first 6 months of 2006 than they paid in the same period of 2005, and \$57 billion more than they paid in the same period of 2004, in large part because of rising oil prices, which reached a 24-year high in 2006 when adjusted for inflation.¹⁷

The argument that Americans really have a love affair with trucks and SUVs may not hold as much water as some might think. In Dr. McManus testimony on Capitol Hill, he states that the past several years actually show that consumers have actually responded to higher gas prices by purchasing fuel-sipping vehicles. “As fuel price doubled between 2002 and 2006, SUV unit sales were seemingly strong. But in reality, automakers were forced to offer expensive incentives, and deep discounts, dropping the SUV and truck price to offset fuel price increases. Sales may have stayed even, but revenue fell and profits fell. From 2002 to 2006, large SUVs lost a third of their resale value. The market shift to trucks slowed, then reversed. Consumers respond to higher fuel prices by buying more fuel-efficient cars.”¹⁸

Automakers also are aware that consumers want these more fuel-efficient vehicles, despite their arguments that seem to point to the contrary. According to a 2007 survey of 150 top auto executives around the world, executives see the biggest likely growth areas to be hybrids and entry-level vehicles. The survey also showed that executives expect the “biggest losers” in global markets over the next 5 years to be SUVs, minivans and large pickup trucks. North American executives surveyed expect hybrids (95 percent) among their expected top growth markets. Additionally, the report states: “In fact, four out of five executives interviewed think fuel prices ‘will have a permanent significant impact on the kind of vehicles consumers buy.’”¹⁹

¹⁷ U.S. Government Accountability Office, page 1.

¹⁸ Committee on Senate Finance, page 3-4.

¹⁹ KPMG International, “Momentum: 2007 KPMG Global Auto Executive Survey,” 2007, pages 2-3.

There is ample polling data showing that consumers want more fuel-efficient vehicles now – not later. A February 2007 Opinion Research Corporation survey²⁰ conducted for the Civil Society Institute/40MPG.org shows that there is a potential market of at least 2.5 million U.S. consumers right now for the introduction of the much more fuel-efficient cars now being sold overseas – but not in this country.

According to the CSI/40MPG.org survey, nearly nine out of 10 Americans (88 percent) -- including roughly three out of five (58 percent) who feel strongly -- think U.S. consumers should have access to the dozens of more fuel-efficient cars available from U.S. automakers overseas, but not in the U.S.

The bottom line: U.S. consumers want action by Congress to increase U.S. fuel efficiency standards now. The February 2007 CSI/40MPG.org survey found that four out of five Americans -- including 86 percent of Democrats and 76 percent of Republicans and Independents -- say that they would support "Congress taking the lead to achieve the highest possible fuel efficiency as quickly as possible" by raising the fuel-efficiency requirements for U.S. vehicles to achieve the goal of 40 miles per gallon.

More than three quarters of Americans (77 percent) – including 81 percent of Democrats, 72 percent of Republicans and 77 percent of Independents -- think Congress "could help to save troubled U.S. automakers by requiring the same kind of higher fuel efficiency that already is being achieved in Europe," where "foreign automakers offer far more vehicles that achieve 35-40 miles per gallon or more than do U.S. automakers."

Entitled "Missing the Demand: U.S. Consumers and Foreign Fuel-Efficient Cars," the CSI/40mpg.org survey also concluded:

* 85 percent of Americans -- including 91 percent of Democrats, 77 percent of Republicans and 85 percent of Independents -- agree with the statement: "We need higher federal fuel-efficiency standards for vehicles now in order to conserve more energy, making us less dependent on Middle Eastern oil, and to reduce the ill effects of global warming."

* In a level that remains unchanged from a November 2005 CSI/40MPG.org survey asking the same question, more than one in 10 American adults (12 percent) say they "have faced a delay in getting the fuel-efficient car they wanted or were concerned enough about reports of delays not to proceed with purchasing such a vehicle."

²⁰ For the full CSI/40MPG.org survey findings, go to http://www.civilsocietyinstitute.org/021407_CSI_40mpg_fuel_efficiency_news_release.pdf.

* More than nine out of 10 Americans (92 percent) "expect gasoline prices to go back up in the near future" -- including over half (52 percent) who "definitely" expect such higher prices at the pump. Only one out of four Americans say that they are NOT taking "expected future gasoline price increases into consideration in thinking about buying a new vehicle."

* 76 percent of Americans are as or more likely to "buy a hybrid or other more fuel-efficient vehicle" today than they were six months ago.

Even autoworkers think that Washington should move now to increase federal fuel-efficiency standards. A separate February 2007 CSI/40MPG.org survey²¹ shows that Michigan residents do not cut Detroit any slack when it comes to increasing fuel efficiency and decreasing global warming pollution. More than two thirds of Michigan autoworker households (67 percent) and a slightly higher level of all households in the state (72 percent) said that Washington could "help U.S. automakers be more competitive by increasing the federal fuel-efficiency standard to 40 miles per gallon," according to the survey.

More than four out of five Michigan residents (84 percent) agreed that "the U.S. auto industry is in major trouble and Michigan's economy will suffer seriously if the situation of the Big Three automakers gets even worse." Those in Michigan households linked a "great deal/somewhat" to the health of the auto industry are even more likely (89 percent) to see the industry as being in serious trouble today. A slim 11 percent of all state residents think that "despite current problems in the U.S. auto industry, Michigan's economy is unlikely to suffer very much since the Big Three automakers have a good plan for moving ahead."

²¹ For a full report on the ORC survey findings for CSI and 40MPG.org, go to http://www.40mpg.org/pdfs/022807_CSI_40MPG_Michigan_survey_results.pdf.

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