

Dear Californian:

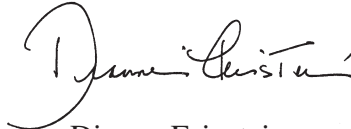
Today, the average fuel economy of our nation's vehicles is 24 miles per gallon, the lowest it has been in 22 years. In recent years, I have sought to improve the efficiency of America's passenger fleet by phasing in increased fuel economy standards for sport utility vehicles (SUVs) and light trucks.

That is why Senator Olympia Snowe (R-Maine) and I seek to close the so-called "SUV loophole" that has existed in law since 1975, effectively exempting SUVs and light trucks from achieving the same fuel efficiency requirements as passenger cars. Our legislation would require light trucks and SUVs to meet the same 27.5 mile per gallon mileage standard that we require of passenger cars.

Closing the SUV loophole would save one million barrels of oil per day, reduce oil imports by 10 percent, and prevent over 240 million tons of carbon dioxide from contributing to global warming. Simply put, this legislation is the single most effective step our nation can take to limit dependence on foreign oil and better protect our environment.

Please review the following pages, and I look forward to hearing your views on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dianne Feinstein". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "D".

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

A Brief History

In recent years, Senator Feinstein has worked to raise the federal fuel efficiency standards for light trucks and SUVs which currently average 20.7 miles per gallon. This is roughly 7 miles per gallon *less* than the standard for passenger cars.

In 1975, Congress mandated separate Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards for automobiles and SUVs/light trucks. These average miles per gallon (mpg) requirements were passed with bipartisan support and signed into law by President Gerald Ford.

When standards were first set, light trucks comprised only a small percentage of vehicles on the road, which people used mainly for hauling and towing.

Today, our roads look much different — SUVs and light trucks have become widely used as passenger vehicles. Roughly half of all new vehicles sold in the U.S. are SUVs or light trucks. Furthermore, federal fuel efficiency standards for light trucks and SUVs have not changed significantly since 1984.



CAFE standards are crucial for controlling harmful vehicle emissions and reducing oil consumption.

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) is required by law to set CAFE standards for SUVs and light trucks for each model year. Yet, for years automakers succeeded in convincing enough members in Congress to freeze CAFE standards on the annual transportation spending bill. Such lobbying has effectively tied the hands of DOT and prolonged the life of the SUV loophole.

Although some automakers have expressed interest in improving the fuel economy of light trucks and SUVs, Senator Feinstein and her supporters believe further action is necessary.

Why We Need to Increase CAFE

Global warming is an increase in the earth's surface temperature, caused by an accumulation of gases in the atmosphere that trap heat – so-called “greenhouse gases.” Since the beginning of the industrial revolution, levels of carbon dioxide – the number one greenhouse gas and the largest contributor to global warming – have increased by nearly 30% in the atmosphere.



At the same time, other greenhouse gases have dramatically increased — methane concentrations have more than doubled and nitrous oxide concentrations have risen by about 15%. These increases have caused the global surface temperature to rise by approximately one degree Fahrenheit in the past century. As a result:

The National Academy of Science reports that “warming process has intensified in the past 20 years, accompanied by retreating glaciers, thinning arctic ice, [and] rising sea levels.”

- The 20th Century was the warmest on record, the 1990s was the warmest decade, and 1998 was the warmest year.
- Authorities estimate that the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere will rise in the next century, causing a **3.6 to 10 degree** Fahrenheit increase in surface temperature.
- Scientists predict a total “drying up” of the entire Sierra Nevada snow pack in the next 100 years, leaving California with no major fresh water supply and causing other serious environmental problems.

Senator Feinstein’s legislation to increase fuel efficiency standards can lower SUV and light truck emissions, which threaten the earth’s fragile eco-system.

Closing the SUV Loophole

Can We Do It?

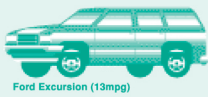
Each gallon of gasoline used by a vehicle spews 26.5 pounds of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Due to their lower fuel economy, SUVs and light trucks burn more gas per mile and therefore emit more global warming pollution per mile than the average car.

SUVs and light trucks lack innovative, fuel-saving technology, and legislators must address this if air quality is to improve. As more people purchase these vehicles, the overall fuel economy of the fleet decreases, consumers must pay more at the pumps, and more global warming pollutants are emitted.

While we use new, efficient technologies in every other aspect of our lives, from computerized refrigerators to motion-detecting light bulbs, the family car remains fundamentally unchanged.

The More You Guzzle, the More You Pollute

Represented below is the total tonnage of CO₂ produced by SUV's and other vehicles over a 124,000-mile lifetime.



Ford Excursion (13mpg)

134
tons of CO₂



Chevy Blazer (18mpg)

96



Ford Taurus (22mpg)

79



Honda Civic EX (36mpg)

48



Honda Insight (45mpg)
Hybrid Electric Vehicle (HEV)

27

Today, the United States is the largest energy consumer in the world. Americans represent four percent of the world's population yet use 25 percent of the planet's overall energy. Forty percent of the oil we use goes directly into our automobiles.

Therefore, as the largest energy consumer and top contributor of greenhouse gases, we must take a leadership role in implementing efficiency ideas. The technology exists to make lasting changes, but apply the science and we must close the loophole in CAFE standards.

The Feinstein-Snowe Legislation

Senators Feinstein and Olympia Snowe introduced legislation to equalize fuel efficiency standards for SUVs and light duty trucks with that of passenger cars.

The legislation would gradually increase fuel efficiency standards for SUVs and light duty trucks by 2011. The bill also increases the fuel economy of the federal government's fleet of automobiles.



Specifically, the Feinstein-Snowe legislation would:

- Phase in fuel economy standards for SUVs and all other light duty trucks. *Using technology, regulation, and incentives, we can burn less fuel, clean up the air, and save Americans money.*
- Require that vehicles up to a weight of 10,000 pounds must qualify for federal fuel efficiency standards. The current limit is 8,500 pounds.
- Increase the fuel economy of the federal government fleet by requiring new vehicles to reach an additional 6 miles per gallon.

This action will save more oil every year than the amount the U.S. could extract from the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska.

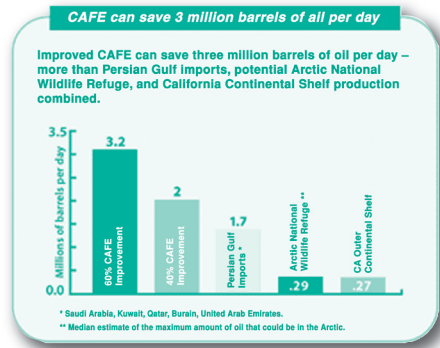
Growing Evidence

The National Academy of Sciences Report

In July 2001, the National Academy of Sciences reported that the fuel economy of sport utility vehicles and light trucks could be raised to a level equal that of passenger cars. The report also states that these improvements would pay for themselves through savings in fuel costs.

Specifically, the NAS study found:

- The CAFE Program has clearly contributed to increased fuel economy of the nation's light duty vehicle fleet during the past 22 years.
- Improved fuel economy has reduced dependence on imported oil, strengthened trade and reduced emissions of CO₂, relative to what they otherwise would have been. If fuel economy had not improved, gasoline consumption would be about 2.8 million barrels a day higher than it is, or about 14% higher than present consumption.
- Technologies exist that, if applied to passenger cars and light duty trucks, would significantly reduce fuel consumption within 15 years. Auto manufacturers are already offering many of these innovations in other markets (Europe and Japan, for example where much higher fuel prices have spurred their development).
- Concerns about greenhouse gas emissions and the level of oil imports make it appropriate for the federal government to require fuel economy levels beyond those expected to result from market forces alone.



Science shows that stronger CAFE standards are working to reduce vehicle emissions, conserve oil, and fight global warming.

Steps You Can Take

To Improve Vehicle Efficiency and Reduce Emissions

Write your elected officials. Urge them to support higher fuel efficiency by eliminating the SUV loophole.

Drive your car more efficiently. Make sure the car is tuned up and the tires are properly inflated for better performance and efficiency. If you have two cars, drive the more efficient one whenever possible.

See the Sights and Stretch Your Legs. Walk, bike, take a bus, or carpool when possible. Use your car only when necessary. Public transportation authorities often have carpooling information as well as transit services.

Take a Break! Turn off the engine when sitting idle for more than a minute. Use air conditioning only when necessary.

Buy Hybrid Electric Vehicles. Several car companies are offering hybrid vehicles, powered by both a combustion engine and a battery-powered electric motor. Honda, Toyota and other manufacturers have developed affordable, high-performing vehicles which can save you thousands of dollars a year in fuel costs while significantly reducing emissions of greenhouse gases.

Save Extra Steps. Combine errands into one trip. Consolidate trips to destinations that are near one another. Once you arrive, park and walk between destinations. You not only save gas this way, but reduce wear-and-tear on your car.

Fill Up Your Wallet - Not the Gas Tank. Avoid high speeds. You can improve your gas mileage about 15 percent by driving at 55 mph rather than 65 mph.

For More Information

If you are interested in receiving more information about this important issue, please log on to Senator Feinstein’s website (<http://feinstein.senate.gov>) and register to receive e-mail updates, or contact:

Environmental Protection Agency

Environmental Protection Agency

Ariel Rios Building

1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.

Washington, DC 20460

(202) 260-2090

EPA General Number: (202) 260-2090

OTAQ General Information Requests: (734) 214-4333

www.epa.gov

National Academy of Sciences

500 5th Street NW

Washington D.C. 20001

(202) 334-2000

www.nas.edu

U.S Department of Transportation

400 7th Street, SW

Washington DC 20590.

Information: (202) 366- 4000

www.dot.gov

American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy

(To find out which appliances are worth looking at, send for the booklet “The Most Energy Efficient Appliances”)

1001 Connecticut Ave., N.W.,

Washington, D.C. 20036

Information: (202) 429-8873

www.aceee.org