

Bush considers raising fuel standards

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The Bush administration is reportedly considering raising the fuel standards that are required for vehicles sold across the nation.

A preliminary version of the rules released last summer required vehicles to average 24 miles per gallon by 2011, but the final rules may increase that to 25 mpg by 2011, environmental groups told the Detroit News.

Also reportedly being considered is the inclusion of heavier sport utility vehicles and passenger vans in the fuel economy rules for the first time.

The announcement will be watched closely by environmentalists and Detroit automakers. Environmentalists say the announcement is a test for President Bush, who has called for reducing Middle East oil imports 75 percent by 2025. Automakers would face higher vehicle costs if the standards are increased.

The new rules would raise fuel economy standards for all cars and trucks from 22.5 mpg in 2008 to 23.5 mpg in 2010 and about 24 mpg in 2011. The current standard is 21.6 miles per gallon for light trucks and 27.5 mpg for passenger cars, although some foreign automakers pay fines rather than comply with the standards.

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