

U.S. cars among world's worst polluters

June 28 2006



U.S. cars and pickup trucks are reportedly responsible for nearly half of the world's greenhouse gases emitted by such vehicles.

Environmental Defense, a New York non-profit organization, says the nation's autos emit the most pollution, although they comprise only 30 percent of the world's nearly 700 million cars, The Los Angeles Times reported Wednesday.

Environmental Defense said U.S. cars are driven more miles, provide less fuel economy and use fuel with more carbon than many automobiles driven in other countries.

As far as mileage, the Environmental Defense report said U.S. cars and light trucks were driven 2.6 trillion miles during 2004, equal to driving to Pluto and back more than 470 times, the Times said.

The report also noted U.S. small cars emit more carbon dioxide than do SUVs -- 25 percent of the total compared with 21 percent. That, said the report's lead author, John DeCicco, is because there are more older small vehicles with higher emissions still in service.

Environmental Defense said it hopes its findings will lead to laws requiring higher fuel economy standards for vehicles and a mandatory cap on greenhouse gases from all sources.

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