

# Guzzlers B Gone: New fuel economy labels for cars

May 30 2011, By Sandy Bauers

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For years we've had great efficiency labels for washing machines, for refrigerators, for dishwashers and more.

Now, [federal officials](#) have unveiled new efficiency [labels](#) for cars. They'll show not only the [miles per gallon](#) the car is expected to get, but how much a year's worth of fuel will cost (based on certain averages) and, if it's an efficient car, how much you might expect to save in fuel costs over five years.

So if you're looking at a car that costs \$5,000 more than a less-efficient counterpart, will you save more than \$5,000 in fuel?

For the first time, the label also will factor in environmental attributes, giving each car a [greenhouse gas](#) rating and a smog rating. It will enable shoppers to compare the vehicle they're looking at with the overall pool of cars. On a scale of one to 10 for smog rating, for instance, is yours a three, a seven, a 10?

You probably won't see the labels until the 2013 year models come out. [Automakers](#) can voluntarily use them ahead of time, but starting with those 2013 models the labels must be affixed to all new passenger cars and trucks, including not only regular old gasoline versions but also hybrids and plug-ins.

Officials say the new labels come just in time to dovetail with the 2010 [fuel economy](#) rule, which will increase the [energy efficiency](#) of cars and

trucks built for 2012 and beyond. Officials say the new standards will save the average car-buyer \$3,000 in [fuel costs](#).

You can find more information about the new labels here:

[www.fueleconomy.gov/feg/label/index.shtml](http://www.fueleconomy.gov/feg/label/index.shtml)

The [Environmental Protection Agency](#) and the Department of Transportation had originally floated two fuel economy labels to the public, and while some preferred the other version - one that gave cars a letter grade, such as A or B or C - environmental groups praised the move.

"Information is power - in this case, the power for Americans to choose the cleanest new cars," said Nathan Willcox, Federal Global Warming Program Director for Environment America. "These new labels are an important step toward getting cleaner, more fuel-efficient cars on the road, which will cut air pollution and ease Americans' pain at the pump."

"At the end of the day, we need all of our cars to be clean, and the biggest step the Obama administration can take toward that goal is to move clean cars into the fast lane by making sure that new cars and trucks meet a 60 miles per gallon standard by 2025," Willcox said. "This is the single biggest step we could take toward getting off of oil - protecting our shores from oil drilling, cleaning our air and saving Americans billions at the gas pump."

The National Automobile Dealers Association had fought the letter grades, and its statement focused on that: "For decades, car and truck buyers have relied on miles per gallon - or MPG - to compare the fuel economy of different vehicles. With gasoline spiking to over \$4 a gallon and alternative fuel vehicles hitting dealer showrooms, rolling out a totally unfamiliar 'letter grade' label would have only served to confuse and frustrate consumers. NADA applauds the Obama administration's

decision to drop the ill-advised 'letter grade' in favor of one that prominently displays a vehicle's MPG. By doing so, car shoppers can make informed comparisons on dealers' lots, allowing them to take advantage of new technologies, which will ultimately put more fuel efficient vehicles on the road."

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