

Vehicles of 2017 could get 54.5 mpg

November 21 2011, By Sandy Bauers

One of the most powerful points in Thomas Friedman's book, "Hot, Flat and Crowded," was that when President Ronald Reagan rolled back fuel efficiency standards for American vehicles, it wasted an amount of petroleum equivalent to what's under the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Quite an image.

Since then, economy standards have eked upward.

The Obama administration recently announced standards for model year 2017-2025 passenger cars and [light trucks](#). The proposal calls for increases in fuel efficiency equivalent to 54.5 mpg - if all reductions were made through fuel economy improvements. So clearly there's wiggle room here for other improvements to add up to fuel efficiency.

The latest standard, for model year vehicles 2012-2016, will raise [fuel efficiency](#) equivalent to 35.5 mpg by 2016.

According to the [Environmental Protection Agency](#), cars, SUVs, minivans and pickup trucks are responsible for nearly 60 percent of U.S. transportation-related petroleum use and [greenhouse gas emissions](#). The agency says that today's proposed standards would reduce [oil consumption](#) by 4 billion barrels and cut 2 billion metric tons of [greenhouse gas pollution](#) over the lifetimes of the vehicles sold in those years.

On the level of an individual consumer, the agency said that the new standards would cost an average of up to \$6,600 in fuel costs over the lifetime of a model year 2025 vehicle for a net lifetime savings of \$4,400 after factoring in related increases in vehicle cost.

"Overall, the net benefit to society from this rule would total more than \$420 billion over the lifetime of the vehicles sold in model year 2017-2025," the EPA said in a press release.

Environmental groups praised the move.

"The Obama administration's clean cars proposal represents the biggest step ever taken to end America's addiction to Big Oil," said Jillian Hertzberg, Clean Vehicles Associate with Environment America, in a press release. "By making the cars and trucks of the future cleaner and more fuel efficient, these standards will reap big benefits for our environment, our health and our economy."

More information: Read more about the proposal:
www.nhtsa.gov/fuel-economy

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