

Recent gains in gas mileage have fueled major societal benefits

October 14 2014, by Bernie Degroat

Fuel economy in the U.S. has increased 26 percent in the last seven years, saving billions of gallons of gas and billions of pounds of vehicle emissions, say University of Michigan researchers.

Since October 2007, gas mileage of new vehicles has improved from 20.1 mpg to 25.3 mpg, according to Michael Sivak and Brandon Schoettle of the U-M Transportation Research Institute.

"While this improvement is rather modest in absolute terms, it is substantial in comparison with the changes throughout the 20th century," Sivak said.

Sivak and Schoettle collected fuel data on 93 million new cars, pickup trucks, vans and SUVs sold in the U.S. since 2007—accounting for nearly 40 percent of all light vehicles on U.S. roads today.

Using a recent estimate of the average annual distance driven in the U.S. (about 11,400 miles), they found that [new vehicles](#) in the last seven years saved about 15.1 billion gallons of fuel—equal to a little more than a month's worth of gas consumption for all vehicles in the U.S.

"Another way to assess the benefits of the improved fuel economy is to examine the current savings in the use of fuel," Sivak said. "For September, the savings amount to 614 million gallons, which represents a reduction of about 12 billion pounds of carbon dioxide."

Since 2007, 15.1 billion gallons of fuel have been saved—a cumulative reduction of 297 billion pounds of [carbon dioxide](#) emissions.

"The improvements in vehicle fuel economy over the past seven years are noteworthy, especially in relation to the improvements during the preceding eight decades," Sivak said. "As a consequence, we have seen sizeable savings in fuel consumed and emissions produced. The most recent [fuel economy](#) standards issued in 2012 will continue to accelerate this process."

Provided by University of Michigan

Citation: Recent gains in gas mileage have fueled major societal benefits (2014, October 14) retrieved 16 April 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2014-10-gains-gas-mileage-fueled-major.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--