

New Research Finds Strong Support for More Fuel Efficient Vehicles, Link Between Higher Fuel Economy and Higher Owner Satisfaction

A new set of research from Consumers Union, the advocacy and policy arm of Consumer Reports, finds strong support for improving fuel economy for new cars and trucks and a positive link between higher automotive fuel economy and higher owner satisfaction.

Washington, D.C. ([PRWEB](#)) June 23, 2016 -- Despite historically low gas prices, consumers still value more fuel efficient cars and trucks, according to a new survey released by Consumers Union, the policy and advocacy arm of Consumer Reports. Higher automotive fuel efficiency is also positively associated with higher owner satisfaction, according to a separate statistical analysis from Consumer Reports. As federal and state regulators begin their review of the Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards for model years 2022 to 2025, these findings highlight that car and truck buyers place a high value on fuel economy over many other vehicle characteristics.

“Consumers want cars that don’t drain their pocketbook – either through costly repairs or guzzling gasoline,” said Shannon Baker-Branstetter, policy counsel for Consumers Union. “These findings should be another reminder to automakers that developing more fuel efficient vehicles is attractive to their customers.”

The consumer survey finds strong support for stronger fuel standards. Large majorities of Americans believe increasing fuel efficiency is important (84%) and that the federal government should continue to mandate higher fuel economy in cars and trucks (73%). This support extends across all regions of the United States and across political parties. Indeed, majorities of both Republicans and Democrats say the federal government should require automakers to produce more fuel efficient vehicles.

Other key findings include:

- When asked what characteristic of your current vehicle could use the most improvement, the top response was fuel economy (32%).
- Sixty percent (60%) of respondents stated they were willing to pay more for a fuel efficient vehicle if costs could be recouped by fuel savings within 5 years.
- Over 80% believe that making larger vehicles, including SUVs and trucks, more fuel efficient was important.
- Three out of four respondents (76%) believe that increasing fuel economy from an average of 25 MPG today to an average of 40MPG in 2025, as the existing CAFE standards mandate, is a worthwhile goal.

Indeed, perceptions of fuel economy also impact Americans’ view on which automakers produce the “best” vehicles. According to the survey, automakers identified as the offering the most fuel efficient vehicles (Honda and Toyota) also topped the list of the “best” vehicles. Similarly, automakers believed to have the worst fuel economy were among those listed as producing the worst vehicles overall.

The report also looked at consumer perception of fuel economy standards in states that have high percentages of auto industry workers (Alabama, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, and Missouri). A majority of respondents in these states believe that improving fuel economy will strengthen the industry (56%); increasing production of more fuel efficient vehicles will create jobs in their states (58%); and that the auto industry can both improve fuel efficiency and maintain healthy sales (74%).

In a separate statistical analysis of automotive factors that are linked to owner satisfaction, researchers at Consumer Reports found a strong link between fuel economy and owners who are most satisfied with their vehicles. Fuel economy was second only to reliability in its influence on owner satisfaction.

The study is based on vehicle data collected from Consumer Report Auto Test Center and survey responses from approximately 1 million Consumer Reports members who owned a tested vehicle. Owner satisfaction is determined by survey respondents who stated that they would definitely buy their vehicle again. When holding other vehicle characteristics (acceleration, horsepower, reliability and price) constant, the study found a strong positive correlation between owner satisfaction and fuel economy. The analysis found the correlation to exist for both cars and SUVs.

The study also looked at owner satisfaction based on owner-reported miles-per-gallon for the same vehicle model, in order to isolate other factors that might impact satisfaction rates. This analysis corroborated the clear link between satisfaction and higher fuel economy.

The link is not just limited to sedans. Owners of SUVs, pickup trucks and vans all reported increased owner satisfaction as fuel economy increased.

“Increasing fuel economy is a win-win for consumers and automakers,” said Baker-Branstetter. “Consumers save money and automakers can appeal to more buyers with more models to choose from.”

For more information, visit: <http://consumersunion.org/news/2016-fuel-economy-reports/>

Note: The Consumer Reports National Research Center fielded this year’s National Vehicle Fuel Economy Poll from May 11 – 18, 2016. A general population sample of 1,052 members of GfK’s web-enabled KnowledgePanel® were randomly selected. All survey participants were 18 years of age or older. The margin of error for the full sample was +/- 3.28 percentage points.

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Consumers Union is the public policy and advocacy division of Consumer Reports. Consumers Union works for health reform, food and product safety, financial reform, and other consumer issues in Washington, D.C., the states, and in the marketplace. Consumer Reports is the world’s largest independent product-testing organization. Using its more than 50 labs, auto test center, and survey research center, the nonprofit rates thousands of products and services annually. Founded in 1936, Consumer Reports has over 8 million subscribers to its magazine, website, and other publications.



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