



LAX FUEL ECONOMY STANDARDS FOR LIGHT TRUCKS COST LIVES

Detroit Chooses to Profit While Consumers Pay: “Super-Sized” Vehicles Increase Highway Carnage

- Without appropriate, reasonable increases in fuel economy standards, EPA data show that automakers made use of predictable advances in technology and engine efficiency (totaling 1.9 mpg average yearly) to bulk up the weight and acceleration of vehicles while allowing vehicle gas mileage stagnate.
- Applying engine and fuel efficiency improvements since 1981 towards the improvement of fuel economy would have brought cars on average to approximately 40 mpg, and light trucks to 28 mpg, *without any other special effort by automakers*.¹ On-the-shelf, currently available technology was also able to augment these gains.
- Instead, automakers increased the weight and size of vehicles, widening the divergence of vehicle weights on the highway, and making two-vehicle crashes far more deadly. Weight is the single most important determinant in the risk posed by SUVs to others on the road.²
- In 1975, the difference in average weight between cars and light trucks was 3 lbs. In 2003, it was 1,185 lbs.³

Increasing the Weight and Size of Light Trucks Increases the Body Count in Collisions

- In front-to-front crashes, SUVs are more than 4 times more deadly than cars and pickups are over 6.2 times more deadly.
- In front-to-side crashes, SUVs are more than twice as deadly as cars and pickups are almost four times as deadly.⁴
- According to a recent study by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, when a car was struck in the side by a pickup, van, or SUV, the fatality was 20.8 times more likely to have been in the passenger car.
- In a head-on collision between a car and a light truck, the fatality was 3.3 times more likely to be among car occupants.⁵

MAKE AMERICAN HIGHWAYS SAFER FOR EVERYONE: SUPPORT MEANINGFUL INCREASES IN FUEL ECONOMY

For more information see www.citizen.org/autosafety/fuelecon & www.betterSUV.org

¹ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, “Light-Duty Automotive Technology and Fuel Economy Trends: 1975 Through 2003,” EPA420-R03-006, April 2003.

² Hans Joksch, “Vehicle Design versus Aggressivity,” Report No. DOT HS 908 194, April 2000.

³ EPA (2003)

⁴ Jeffrey W. Runge, M.D., NHTSA Administrator, “Meeting the Safety Challenge” at the Automotive News World Congress, Dearborn, Michigan, Jan. 14, 2003.

⁵ National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, “2002 Annual Assessment,” July 2003.