

40MPG.ORG POLL: 2 OUT OF 3 AMERICANS SEE BUYING MORE FUEL-EFFICIENT VEHICLE AS “PATRIOTIC,” HIGH GAS PRICES ALREADY DRIVING HALF TO DO SO

NASCAR Fans, Conservatives and Others Agree: 40 MPG Fuel-Efficiency Standard Should Be U.S. Goal; New 40mpg.org Web Site Gives Americans Way to Talk Back to Automakers, Congress

DETROIT, MI///March 17, 2005///Faced with steadily rising prices at the gas pump, two out of three Americans now agree that it is patriotic to buy a fuel efficient vehicle that uses less gasoline and, therefore, requires this country to import less oil from the Middle East, according to a new Opinion Research Corp. national opinion poll released today to launch <http://www.40mpg.org>, which gives car owners a powerful new forum in which to tell automakers and Congress that they support a federal fuel efficiency standard of 40 miles per gallon (mpg). The 40mpg.org survey shows that three out of five conservatives (57 percent) concur that buying a more fuel-efficient vehicle is a patriotic act, as do 67 percent of those who follow NASCAR.

Sponsored by Results For America, which is a project of the nonprofit and nonpartisan Civil Society Institute, the 40mpg.org survey also reveals that about half of Americans – hit hard in the pocketbook by rising gas prices -- either already have purchased (26 percent) a more fuel-efficient vehicle or are thinking about doing so (24 percent).

To drive home the potential benefits of a higher federal fuel efficiency standard, the new 40mpg.org Web site features a powerful calculator that allows visitors to plug in estimates for their current vehicle’s fuel efficiency level, a typical price paid for gasoline in recent weeks, and total number of miles driven per year. For example, a driver who gets 17 miles to the gallon, pays \$2 a gallon for gasoline and drives 25,000 miles per year, could achieve the following each year by switching to a 40 mpg vehicle: save \$1,691.18 at the gas pump; require the importation of 845 fewer gallons of oil from the troubled Middle East region; and cut personal air pollution by 16,912 pounds of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions.

Civil Society Institute President Pam Solo: **“The benefits of making 40 miles per gallon the standard for all autos in the United States are obvious to Americans: consumers save money; we reduce our dangerous reliance on Middle Eastern oil, making us more secure in the world; and air pollution is reduced. Greater fuel efficiency makes sense, it is technologically possible, the benefits are real and the challenges can be overcome. We have created the 40mpg.org campaign so that automakers and politicians can hear directly from consumers that they want more fuel-efficient vehicles with the best available technology – and that Americans want such cars now.”**

Opinion Research Corporation Senior Research Associate Graham Hueber said: **“This survey documents the fact that Americans of all stripes – including NASCAR racing fans, conservatives, technophiles and just about every other major category – understand the significance of making more fuel-efficient vehicles available for purchase. Soaring gasoline prices and continuing worries about U.S. dependency on Middle Eastern oil appear to be the**

big factors behind the widespread support for more fuel-efficient vehicles and the adoption of a federal 40 mile per gallon standard.”

ABOUT [WWW.40MPG.ORG](http://www.40mpg.org)

In addition to the 40mpg calculator, the new <http://www.40mpg.org> Web site also include powerful features that permit visitors to: join a community of other people who own their vehicle make/model; compare and contrast one vehicle’s fuel-efficiency ratings with those of others; monitor how individual members of Congress weighed in on the most recent fuel-efficiency standard votes; contact automakers to speak out in favor of more fuel-efficient vehicles; and send a letter to the editor of a local newspaper urging the adoption of a 40 mpg fuel-efficiency standard. Visitors who sign up at the 40mpg.org Web site will be contacted in the future to urge lawmakers and automakers to push for more fuel-efficient vehicles.

Project advisor Ailis Aaron, co-author of "The Ultimate Car Book" and "The Used Car Book," said: **“We worked to create a place where people who love their cars, trucks, SUVs, vans and other vehicles – as well as consumers who just want to find out what they can do to save money on gas bills – can get the latest information, stay in touch and get involved to help put more fuel efficient vehicles in the driveways of more Americans as rapidly as possible. Detroit and Congress need to understand that people support this technology. At the same time, Americans have to realize that, if they hope to enjoy all the benefits of more fuel efficient cars, they are going to have to speak up loudly and ask for them.”**

40mpg.org is not affiliated in any way with the maker or makers of any vehicles or fuel-efficiency technology.

KEY SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Two out of three Americans agree that it is patriotic to buy a fuel-efficient vehicle that uses less gasoline and, therefore, requires this country to import less oil from the Middle East. Of the third of Americans who disagree with this statement, only 14 percent do so strongly. About three out of five conservatives (57 percent) agree that buying a fuel-efficient vehicle is a patriotic act, as do 67 percent of those who follow NASCAR.
- Faced with rising gasoline prices, about half of Americans have either already purchased (26 percent) a more fuel-efficient vehicle or are thinking about doing so (24 percent). Similarly, 28 percent of those who indicated that they are interested in cars, trucks and new technology said that they have switched to a more fuel-efficient vehicle.
- Nine out of 10 Americans (89 percent) agree on the importance of government action to reach the 40 mile per gallon fuel efficiency level for U.S. vehicles in order to reduce greenhouse gases and cut dependence on Middle Eastern oil. Only 10 percent disagree that 40 mpg should be a major U.S. policy focus. Supporters of this energy/security policy objective include 83

percent of conservatives, 85 percent of NASCAR fans, and 89 percent of those who are interested in cars, trucks and new technology.

- Well under half of Americans (40 percent) flatly say that rising fuel prices will not drive them buy a more fuel-efficient vehicle. By contrast, 32 percent say gasoline prices already are high enough to force their hand, and another 23 percent say prices rising by anywhere up to 50 cents would cause them to consider switching vehicles. Those claiming that rising gasoline prices will not be a factor in a new vehicle decision include conservatives (48 percent) and NASCAR fans (45 percent). By contrast, of those who are fans of cars/trucks and new technologies, only 36 percent say that gasoline prices will not sway their decision.
- More than three out of five Americans (63 percent) think the "hybrid technology gap" in which U.S. automakers will fall further behind Japanese and other foreign automakers that have more fully embraced the new fuel-efficient technology – is a serious or somewhat of a problem. The extent of this concern among Americans is essentially bipartisan, including conservatives (60 percent), moderates (70 percent) and liberals (69 percent). Similarly, the concern about the hybrid technology gap is shared by 58 percent of NASCAR fans and 65 percent of car/truck/new technology enthusiasts.

Full survey findings are available online at <http://www.40mpg.org> and <http://www.ResultsForAmerica.org>.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Survey results are based on telephone interviews conducted among a sample of 1,013 adults (504 men and 509 women) aged 18 and over living in private households in the continental United States. Interviewing was completed by Opinion Research Corporation during the period of February 10-13, 2005. Completed interviews of the 1,013 adults were weighted by four variables: age, sex, geographic region, and race, to ensure reliable and accurate representation of the total adult population. The margin of error is plus or minus 3 percentage points for the complete sample of 1,013 adults. Smaller sub-groups will have larger error margins.

ABOUT RFA/CSI

Results For America is a project of the Civil Society Institute (CSI), which is based in Newton, Massachusetts. The mission of CSI is to serve as a catalyst for change by creating problem-solving interactions among people, and between communities, government and business, that can help to improve society.

RFA seeks to shape and tap the tremendous amount of community-level knowledge, experience and innovative action that could solve America's problems in four key areas, including: energy policy. In this context, Results For America states: "Our national energy policy poses a growing threat to our health, to our economy and even to our national security ... Our oil imports make us more vulnerable to terrorists and give us less room to maneuver in our foreign policy. Our failure to develop the next generation of energy technology costs our nation well-paying jobs. The Results

for America environmental initiative is designed to focus attention on the dangers of current US energy and environmental policies and to put real solutions front and center."

CONTACT: Patrick Mitchell, (703) 276-3266 or pmitchell@hastingsgroup.com.

EDITOR'S NOTE: A streaming audio recording of the news event will be available on the Web as of 5 p.m. EST on March 17, 2005 at <http://www.40mpg.org> and <http://www.ResultsForAmerica.org>.