

Federal court nixes fuel economy standards

by UPI

SAN FRANCISCO - Federal fuel economy standards did not properly assess global warming risks, a federal appeals court in San Francisco ruled Thursday. In tossing the mileage standards for some sport utility vehicles, minivans and light trucks, the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals said the new fuel economy rules also didn't include larger SUVs and trucks, the San Francisco Chronicle reported. The decision is a win for several environmental groups and 11 states that argued the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's standards didn't consider the effects of carbon dioxide emissions. Currently, the specified vehicles are required to achieve 22.2 mpg for 2007 models. The new standards, adopted in March 2006, would have boosted that requirement to 24.1 mpg by 2011. The Center for Biological Diversity petitioned the federal appeals court, arguing that a 35-mpg to 38-mpg standard could be achieved by 2015. David Friedman, research director for Union of Concerned Scientists' Clean Vehicles Program, said the ruling "should encourage Congress to eliminate loopholes that would erode the 35-mpg standard ... and require NHTSA to include the real cost of global warming pollution and America's oil addiction when setting new standards."

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