

Smith, Obama want better fuel mileage for motorists

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

Introduce Legislation to Reduce Gasoline Consumption by Half a Trillion Gallons by 2028

U.S. Senator Gordon H. Smith (R-OR) is supporting legislation that will help Oregonians driver farther on a gallon of gas. The Fuel Economy Reform Act of 2007 introduced by U.S. Senator Barack Obama (D-IL), would reduce America's gasoline consumption by more than half a trillion gallons by 2028 and greatly decrease our dependence on foreign oil. This would be the first change in fuel economy standards in 20 years.

“Consumers are demanding fuel efficient vehicles and I believe American ingenuity is up to the task,” Smith said. “The proper mix of fuel economy standards and tax incentives can help auto manufacturers roll out a durable and safe car, truck, or SUV. This is also a national security issue. We shouldn't keep buying oil from countries that use the profits to shoot bullets back at us.”

The Fuel Economy Reform Act scraps the current focus on a fleet wide average and authorizes the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) to develop a new system that sets fuel economy standards based on the attributes of a vehicle (such as its size and weight). The goal, under this new system, is to set individualized fuel economy targets that increase by 4 percent per year (or approximately one mile per gallon). The experts at NHTSA will be able to reduce the annual increase if they conclude that the 4 percent target cannot be reached with current technology or without compromising cost effectiveness or the safety of the entire fleet.

If this 4 percent per year improvement is maintained for 20 years, this bill would reduce gasoline consumption by 549 billion gallons. If gasoline were just \$2.50 per gallon, consumers would save \$1.372 trillion at the pump by 2028.

The Fuel Economy Reform Act will also:

- provide incentives to support domestic automobile manufacturing and the purchase of efficient vehicles and protect incentives to keep the manufacture of small vehicles in the United States

- create new incentives for vehicle manufacturers or parts suppliers to re-tool, expand, or establish manufacturing facilities that produce advanced technology motor vehicles or components

- certain engineering, research and development

- remove the cap on tax benefits currently limited to the first 60,000 vehicle sold per manufacturer, so that anyone who purchases an alternative fuel vehicle can receive the tax credit

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