

**American Automobile Manufacturers Association  
Chrysler Corporation - Ford - General Motors**

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May 3, 1996

Letters to the Editor  
San Francisco Chronicle  
901 Mission Street  
San Francisco, California 94103-2988

Dear Editor:

In his May 2, 1996 Open Forum article, Dr. Bill Wattenburg raises the possibility that the use of California cleaner burning gasoline will lead to large reductions in fuel economy, and that these reductions will cancel the emissions reductions which the fuel provides. He is wrong on both counts.

Fuel economy effects of California Phase 2 reformulated gasoline (CaRFG), and the related federal reformulated gasoline have been the subject of numerous studies. The common conclusions of all of these studies is that the use of reformulated gasoline will lead to an average 1-3 percent (about 0.3-0.8 mpg) reduction in fuel economy. Since much of California was using federal reformulated gasoline in 1995, the average reduction with use of CaRFG should be at the low end of this range. This conclusion is based on numerous independent studies conducted by the State of California, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the State of Wisconsin (with federal RFG), and by auto and oil companies.

As Dr. Wattenburg is aware, the vehicle emissions reductions afforded by the use of California Phase 2 reformulated gasoline are measured in grams per mile driven, so that the cumulative emissions reductions are dependent on total vehicle miles driven, not on the gallons used. Thus, any small increase in fuel consumption will in no way diminish the large emissions benefits realized.

Dr. Wattenburg also contends that the State of California must phase in use of California Phase 2 gasolines "over the next six months or year." The practicalities of gasoline distribution have accomplished this phase-in. California Phase 2 gasoline began to appear at California filling stations in February, reaching 50 percent of gasolines sold in the state by early March, so that California motorists have been using California Phase 2 gasolines during a gradual phase-in which has already occurred.

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) staff has worked very hard with all affected parties to minimize vehicle related problems with California cleaner burning gasoline. Reformulated gasolines have been the subject of a six-year Auto/Oil, \$40 Million study, and have been used in millions of miles of vehicle development and certification testing. All motor vehicle manufacturers believe that the overall vehicle performance will be better with California Phase 2 gasolines, because CARB made the correct technical decisions over five years ago when the Phase 2 regulations were adopted. California cannot achieve the full emissions benefits of the new low emissions vehicles, many of which are already operating in California, without the use of these cleaner burning gasolines.

AAMA members (Chrysler Corporation, Ford Motor Company and General Motors Corporation) have supported the California Phase 2 program because it is effective in reducing emissions from new and older vehicles. The concern over recent gasoline price increases is an understandable one, but only a small

portion of that increase is attributable to CaRFG, and the environmental benefits of these cleaner burning gasolines are too important to delay or give up.

Sincerely,

Signed

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