

Summer/Fall 2005 Newsletter

Dear Friend of Don't Be Fueled!

We hope you have had a wonderful, relaxing summer, and that you haven't had to drive too much!

Fall is here with kids back at school and many changes in the world, including the tragic consequences of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Our prayers are with those affected by these events. We believe that the impacts of Hurricane Katrina on the nation's oil infrastructure, on gasoline prices as well as the horrendous human costs should make this disaster a wake-up call to our political leaders. Our current leaders have by and large stuck their heads in the sand about the nation's over-dependence on petroleum. In a world that is consuming oil faster than new sources can be found, any number of events can threaten supply, driving prices up from terrorism in the Middle East to hurricanes on America's southern coasts. Despite President Bush's request last week that we try not to drive too much, he continues to refuse to embrace meaningful conservation measures that would ameliorate the energy shortages. Will our political leaders ever get tough on Detroit? The time is now. Don't hold your breath, but do write your federal and state legislators.

DBF hosts Tom Wenzel

Weds., October 26, 2005 at Noon

THE SUV SAFETY MYTH: A Talk by Thomas P. Wenzel, Energy Policy Researcher at Lawrence Berkeley National Lab, featured by Malcolm Gladwell in his January 2004 New Yorker article, "Big and Bad: How the SUV ran over Automotive Safety"

Wednesday, October 26th, 12:30-1:30PM, Belvedere Community Center, 450 San Rafael Avenue, Belvedere, CA 94920. Light Refreshments will be served.

Auto Makers Offer More Hybrid Choices

Ford Motor Company has come out with a second hybrid SUV. Even the Sierra Club is commending them. Check out sierraclub.org to see the new Mercury Mariner SUV. Ford has also recently announced that by 2010, half their line-up will be hybrid cars, and that 280,000 of their vehicles will be ethanol-capable by 2007. (http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/Page/document/v4/sub/MarketingPage?user_URL=http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/FRTGAM.20050921.wford0921/FBNStory/FBusiness&ord=1127942973069&brand=theglobeandmail&force_login=true) We need many more hybrids, biodiesels (biodiesel.org) and alternative fuel cars, but this is really getting us rolling. Lexus (a division of Toyota) also has a luxury hybrid RX SUV on the market now. Check it out – this is the one many stars took to the Academy Awards this year!

(http://www.lexus.com/models/rx_hybrid/index.html)

Toyota remains way ahead of all the other car manufacturers when it comes to selling hybrids, and has just added a hybrid version of the Highlander SUV. You can find out

more at

http://www.toyota.com/vehicles/minisite/hybrid/index.html?s_van=GM_TN_HIGHLANDERHYBRID. Next in line the Camry.

San Francisco Leads the Push for Green Fleets

In mid-summer, DBF called the office of San Francisco mayor Gavin Newsom to ask why, given the city's official, passed-by-the-supervisors, signed-by-the-mayor policy of purchasing only clean vehicles, there are so many city-owned SUVs and other gas guzzlers plying San Francisco's streets. We were assured that Mayor Newsom is strongly committed to following through on the promise of the green-fleet legislation. On August 11, 2005, the Mayor's office released a new executive order setting aggressive new targets for city vehicle purchases beginning this fiscal year: of new purchases for the non-emergency passenger automobile fleet, 75% are to be alternative fuel vehicles and 90% are to be either alternative fuel vehicles or high efficiency (i.e. hybrid and PZEV) vehicles. It also directs the Department of Administrative Services to "aggressively pursue alternative fuel and high efficiency versions" of heavier-duty trucks for which few options currently exist and, more importantly, to "narrow the definition of emergency vehicles that are waived from the purchasing requirements under this order." DBF will watch the latter effort closely, as we suspect the "emergency vehicle" loophole is the reason for the many large SUVs operated by police and fire departments. Read the whole executive order at http://www.ci.sf.ca.us/site/mayor_page.asp?id=33883.

Earlier in the year, San Francisco's Yellow Cab Company became the first taxi service to use hybrid taxis in the US. See the press release issued by Mayor Newsom's office : http://www.ci.sf.ca.us/site/mayor_page.asp?id=30039

Newly-Enacted Energy Bill Fails America (and the World)

Our friends at Sierra Club have done a terrific analysis of The New Energy Bill. Let's hear them out: "On August 8th, President Bush signed the Energy Policy Act of 2005 into law. America needs a new direction on energy policy that reduces our oil dependence, invests in clean energy technology and curbs global warming. Sadly, this Act fails to achieve these goals. Instead of taking the country forward, the energy bill harms public health, the environment and consumers. Instead of charting a bold vision for America's energy future, this act undermines some of America's finest and strongest environmental and consumer protections. The bill includes exemptions to the Safe Drinking Water Act for oil and gas drilling and the Clean Water Act for construction related to oil and gas development. Moreover, the bill opens up coastal areas that have been under moratorium for decades to a harmful inventory of oil and gas resources. It also contains a provision that could be used to disadvantage communities and states that wish to seek redress for contaminated drinking water in any new suits filed in state courts. The bill stacks the deck against having an environmental review of a broad range of oil and gas activities, making it much more difficult for the public to have meaningful input. Further, it threatens wildlife and subsistence values of the 23 million-acre National Petroleum Reserve Alaska." For more on this, and what you can do, check out http://www.sierraclub.org/globalwarming/bush_plan and click on "The Biggest Single Step."

TAKE ACTION:

NHTSA Proposes Major Overhaul of CAFE Regulations

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) proposed the first overhaul of the Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards since the program's inception in the mid-1970's. □

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The current CAFE regime divides vehicles into two classes: "cars" and "light trucks" (i.e. pickup trucks, SUVs and minivans). Cars are required to be more fuel efficient than light trucks. Vehicles that weigh more than three tons (Hummers, Ford Excursions, heavy-duty Suburbans, etc) are not subject to any fuel economy standard. Everyone knows that automakers have gotten more than a little creative about remaking some of their light trucks into car-like vehicles in order to sell more under less stringent fuel economy standards. In fact, this was part of the impetus for the new rules.

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The proposed rule change is subject to a public rulemaking process under the Administrative Procedures Act. The rule is not final, but is subject to a public notice-and-comment period. Every member of the public is entitled to submit comments on the proposed rule, and can do so by mail, fax, or an online comment form. We encourage all DBF friends and supporters to submit comments! (See below for how.) This is your chance to tell the federal government what you think it ought to be doing about fuel efficiency.

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Now, what does the proposed rule do? It creates six size categories, each with its own fuel efficiency rules. Three-ton vehicles remain completely exempt from any fuel efficiency standard. Could this have anything to do with an intense lobbying campaign by Hummer owners that preceded release of the new rules? The rules also apply to all automakers across the board, which effectively rewards US automakers for years skating as close to the CAFE line as possible while punishing Japanese makers who have produced fleets comfortably within the CAFE guidelines. Do we detect the influence of Detroit's lobbyists?

See the rule for yourself at

<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/portal/site/nhtsa/menuitem.43ac99aefa80569eea57529cdba046a0/> and please submit comments! The comment period closes **November 22, 2005**.

The process seems a little intimidating, but is actually very easy and need not be time-consuming.

HOW TO SUBMIT COMMENTS: □

Online: <http://dms.dot.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments on the DOT electronic docket site. Or use the or federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the online instructions for submitting comments. **By fax:** 1-202-493-2251. **By mail:** Docket Management Facility; US Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Nassif Building, Room PL-401, Washington, DC 20590-001.

VERY IMPORTANT! Remember, this is a bureaucracy. All submissions must include the agency name and docket number or Regulatory Identification Number (RIN) for this rulemaking. In this case, the NHTSA Docket No is 2005-22223 and the RIN number is RIN 2127-AJ61. View background documents and comments already received at <http://dms.dot.gov>. Also, please send us an e-mail at email@dontbefueled.org to let us know that you submitted a comment! □

IDEAS FOR WHAT TO SAY: □ Tell NHTSA that ((1) any rule that doesn't put all passenger vehicles on a fast track to 40 mpg fails the American people by keeping America hooked on unsustainable levels of oil consumption (2) no category of passenger vehicles should be exempt from CAFE rules: loopholes foster abuse.

□ Mention any or all of DBF's five big reasons why fuel efficiency matters: □

1. **Air Pollution:** light trucks -- SUVs, minivans & pick-up trucks pollute the air up to 5.5 times than cars. Despite nearly 30 years of clean-up efforts, California has 6 of the 10 most ozone-polluted counties in the United States.

2. **Global warming:** Greenhouse gas emissions from America's vehicle fleet alone exceed the total greenhouse gas emissions of nearly all industrialized nations on earth.

3. **Road safety:** People are more likely to be killed in truck-based SUVs & pick-up trucks than in cars. In crashes, these vehicles are three times more lethal to people in other vehicles and especially deadly to bicyclists and pedestrians.

4. **National security:** Money that American consumers spend on gasoline ends up paying for terrorist networks. America's unquenchable thirst for ten million barrels of imported oil a day skews our foreign policy. Why else do we coddle the Saudis?

5. **The Natural World:** Oil drilling hurts nature. Oil exploration currently threatens wildlife and ecosystems in equatorial Africa and South America, the Bering Sea in Russia, and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska. Fuel efficient vehicle technology is the best new source of petroleum.

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ANOTHER ACTION! Go to the Post Carbon Institute's (postcarbon.org) website and buy their documentary entitled, "**The End of Suburbia.**" The DVD is just a fraction of the cost of the what peak oil will cost us! -- and the price of the DVD goes to a good group too! Have some friends over and watch this one -- It will really make you think and talk about what our lives will look like in 2-10 years, when oil resources have peaked, with or without hurricanes on the gulf coast. See the photo in the link below -- We'll have to get used to these kind of prices in the very near future!

(<http://news.yahoo.com/photo/050901/480/gagb10409010035>).

It's always good to be prepared... just like they say in the Girl Scouts!

DBF Turns Heads in Memorial Day Parade!

Our participation in our local Memorial Day Parade was, once again, so fun! Dogs, kids, SUV hybrids, a solar-powered electric car, and many Prius pens, bumper stickers and flyers. Do *you* have a community parade coming up, or kids' soccer tournaments? Hand out our flyer and petition under the DBF moniker. Let us know and we'll send you all you need to start your own *Don't Be Fueled! Mothers for Clean & Safe Vehicles* group. If we can do it, you can! We have flyers for large SUV's that are really nice, the petition that you can send in, or of course, you can have a house party -- We can't do it alone -- Join us, or start your very own Don't Be Fueled group!!!

Drive safely, and keep your eyes peeled for another newsletter soon!

Sincerely,

Betsy, Lauren, Lynn, Eva, Sheira, Janie, Deb, Denise and Susan --

www.dontbefueled.org