



TO: National Environmental Trust
FROM: The Mellman Group
DATE: May 6, 2007
RE: Pickup Truck Owners Strongly Support Increasing Fuel Efficiency Standards

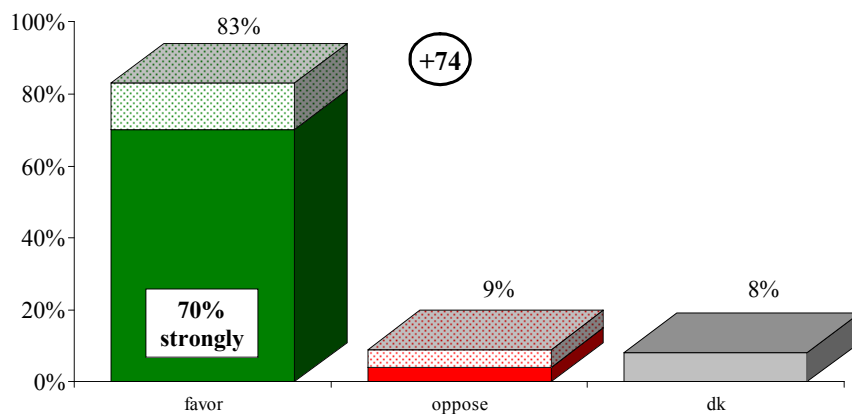
This analysis represents the findings of a national survey of 1000 likely 2008 general election voters who own pickup trucks. Interviews were conducted by telephone April 28 to May 1, 2007. To insure an unbiased sample, random-digit-dialing techniques were used and respondents screened for being likely voters and for being a member of a household that owned a pickup truck. The margin of error for this survey is +/-3.1% at the 95% level of confidence. The margin of error is higher for subgroups.

While opponents of CAFE have attempted to use the specter of distraught pickup truck owners to derail congressional action, the fact is that pickup owners overwhelmingly support requiring the auto industry to increase fuel efficiency standards. Large super-majorities across every demographic subgroup of American pickup owners, including those who drive long distances and those dependent on the auto industry and agriculture, favor mandated fuel efficiency increases, even when presented with strong arguments against that proposal. Pickup owners simply do not believe industry arguments suggesting that pickups will be unavailable or less useful should stricter CAFE standards be adopted. In the end, three-quarters of pickup truck owners want the industry to stop misrepresenting their views and ask their Member of Congress to vote *for* stricter fuel economy standards.

A HUGE MAJORITY OF PICKUP OWNERS SUPPORT REQUIRING THE AUTO INDUSTRY TO INCREASE FUEL EFFICIENCY FOR ALL VEHICLES, INCLUDING THEIR OWN

An Overwhelming Majority Of Pickup Truck Owners Favor Requiring Higher Fuel Efficiency Standards

Do you favor or oppose requiring the auto industry to increase fuel efficiency, that is, increase the average miles per gallon of gasoline that cars, trucks, and SUV's get?



Eighty-three percent (83%) of U.S. pickup owners favor requiring the auto industry to increase fuel efficiency standards for cars, trucks, and SUVs, with over two-thirds of pickup owners (70%) “strongly” favoring such an increase. Just 9% of pickup owners oppose requiring an increase in CAFE.

Support is not only deep, it is also wide, cutting across every demographic segment of pickup owners.

Whether they are Democrats, Republicans or independents, pickup truck owners want stricter fuel efficiency standards. Eight-five percent (85%) of Democrats (76% strongly favor), 84% of independents (68% strongly), and 80% of Republicans (64% strongly) are all in agreement on that view.

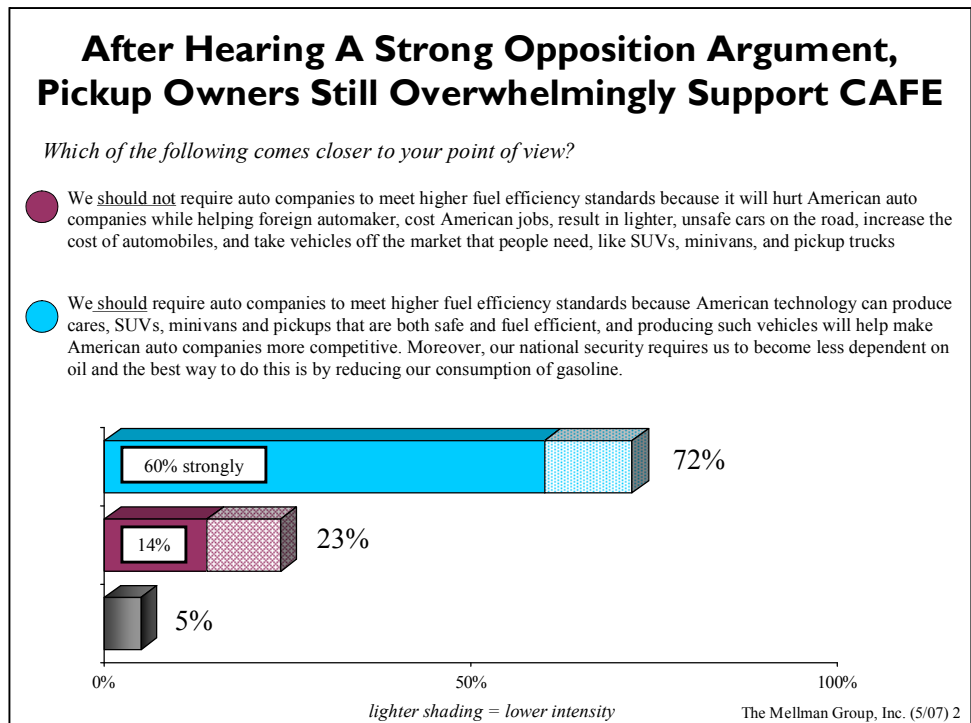
Support among pickup owners for mandated fuel efficiency increases also cuts across geography. Large majorities in every part of the country favor requiring fuel efficiency increases: 90% in the Northeast (80% strongly), 84% in the South (70% strongly), 81% in the Midwest (69% strongly), and 79% in the West (65% strongly).

Also striking is the undiminished strength of support for higher standards among demographic segments that opponents charge would be negatively impacted by the policy. For example, 88% of rural pickup owners support higher standards (78% strongly), those who use their pickup on the job (84% favor, 72% strongly favor), those who drive more than 300 miles per week (84% favor, 67% strongly favor), and those dependent on the auto industry (87% favor, 72% strongly favor) and agriculture (91% favor, 77% strongly favor).

Indeed, there is no segment of the pickup truck owning population among whom support for higher fuel efficiency standards is less than 75%.

PICKUP OWNERS’ SUPPORT FOR HIGHER FUEL EFFICIENCY STANDARDS IS LARGELY IMPERVIOUS TO STRONGLY STATED OPPOSITION ARGUMENTS

We presented pickup owners with arguments on both sides of the proposal to require the auto industry to increase fuel efficiency¹ standards. Respondents heard a strong statement from opponents arguing that tougher requirements would increase auto prices, hurt U.S. auto companies, cost jobs, reduce safety, and take popular vehicles like



¹ Which of the following comes closest to your point of view?

Statement A: We should not require auto companies to meet higher fuel efficiency standards for pickup trucks and cars because it will hurt American auto companies while helping foreign automakers, cost American jobs, result in lighter, unsafe pickup trucks on the road, increase the cost of pickups, and take vehicles off the market that people need, like SUVs, minivans, and pickup trucks.
OR

Statement B: We should require auto companies to meet higher fuel efficiency standards for pickup trucks and cars because American technology can produce pickups that are both safe and fuel efficient, and producing such vehicles will help make American auto companies more competitive. Moreover, our national security requires us to become less dependent on oil, and the best way to do that is by reducing our consumption of gasoline.

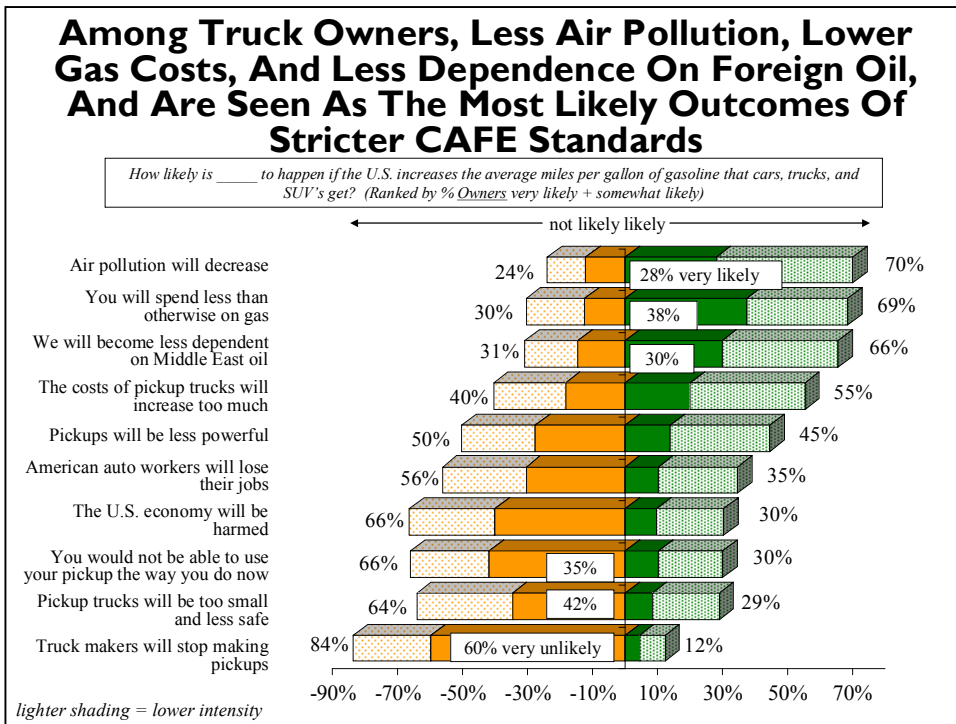
SUV's, minivans, and pickups off the market. Even in the face of these reputedly powerful opposition arguments, a huge 72% majority still favor requiring the auto industry to increase fuel efficiency. In fact, a 60% majority continue to strongly support the stricter standards. Fewer than one-in-four (23%) oppose tougher efficiency standards, even in the face of arguments assumed to be quite compelling.

Across demographic segments, pickup owners are largely impervious to the arguments against raising CAFE standards. Strong majorities across party lines continue to agree that fuel efficiency standards should be increased, with 77% of Democrats (64% strongly), 70% of independents (58% strongly), and 69% of Republicans (57% strongly) all maintaining their support for stricter standards.

Robust support is also evident geographically, with 81% of those in the Northeast (67% strongly), 68% in the South (60% strongly), 74% in the Midwest (61% strongly), and 71% in the West (55% strongly) all favoring higher standards even after hearing the opposition arguments.

A particularly tough test of the popularity of the CAFE proposal is its strength among those who opposition arguments identify as personally impacted. CAFE passes this test with flying colors. Even after hearing the counterargument, 80% of rural pickup owners continue to support higher standards (69% strongly), as do those who use their pickup on the job (70% favor, 60% strongly favor), those who drive more than 300 miles per week (80% favor, 63% strongly favor), as well as those who make a living from the auto industry (71% favor, 59% strongly favor) and agriculture (76% favor, 64% strongly favor).

PICKUP OWNERS SEE CLEAR BENEFITS FROM IMPLEMENTING HIGHER FUEL STANDARDS, BUT THEY SIMPLY DO NOT BELIEVE OPPONENTS' ARGUMENTS



We carefully probed pickup owners' expectations as to the impact of higher fuel economy standards. They believe stricter standards would result in less pollution (70% "likely"), less spending on gasoline (69% "likely"), and reduced dependence on foreign oil (66% "likely").

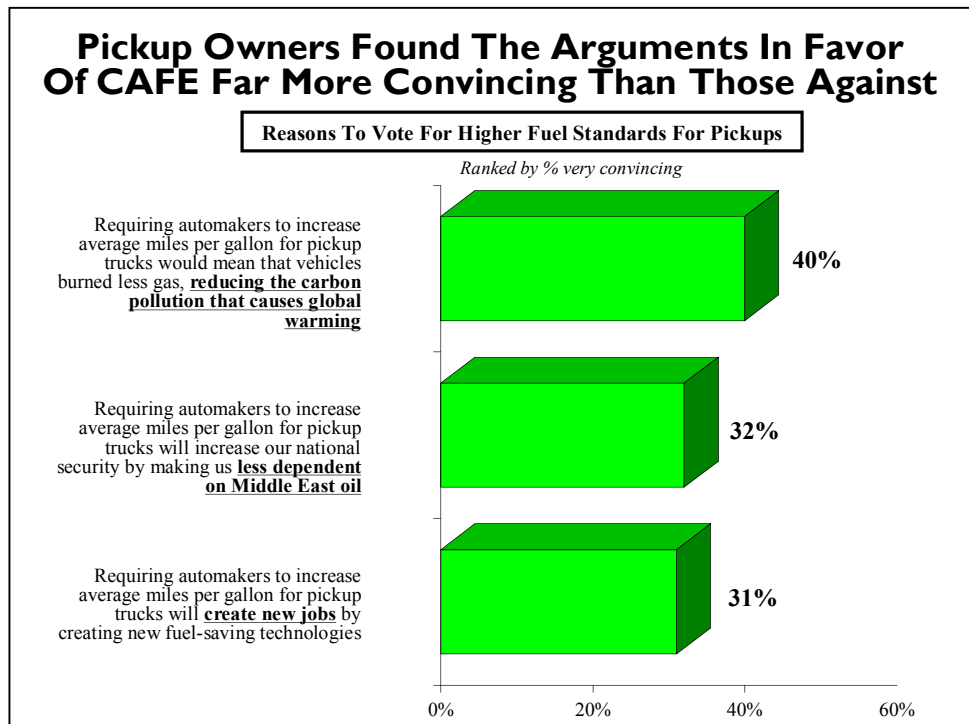
Moreover, these benefits are quite important to pickup owners. We asked respondents to indicate how good or bad possible outcomes of a CAFE policy would be, using a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 was "one of the worst things that could happen" and 10 was "one of the best things that could happen."

Less pollution (average rating 7.3 out of 10), lower gas costs (7.8), and reduced dependence on foreign oil (7.6) are not only seen as quite likely to occur, they are also viewed as the most important and positive outcomes.

At the same time, opposition messages lack basic credibility. Very few believe that “Truck makers will stop making pickups” (84% “*unlikely*,” 12% “*likely*”) or that pickup trucks will be “too small and less safe” (64% “*unlikely*,” 29% “*likely*”) if CAFE is passed. Most also reject as not credible the arguments that “American auto workers will lose their jobs” (56% *unlikely*,” 35% “*likely*”) or that “The U.S. economy will be harmed” (66% “*unlikely*,” 30% “*likely*”) as a result of higher fuel economy standards.

EVEN THE WEAKEST ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF STRICTER CAFE STANDARDS FOR PICKUP TRUCKS IS FAR STRONGER THAN THE MOST CONVINCING ARGUMENT AGAINST

We presented pickup owners with a number of arguments both for and against requiring automakers to increase fuel efficiency standards for pickup trucks and asked them to rate each one as either “very,” “somewhat,” “not too,” or “not at all” convincing. Even the weakest argument in favor of higher fuel standards was rated as far more convincing than any of the arguments against the tougher standards.

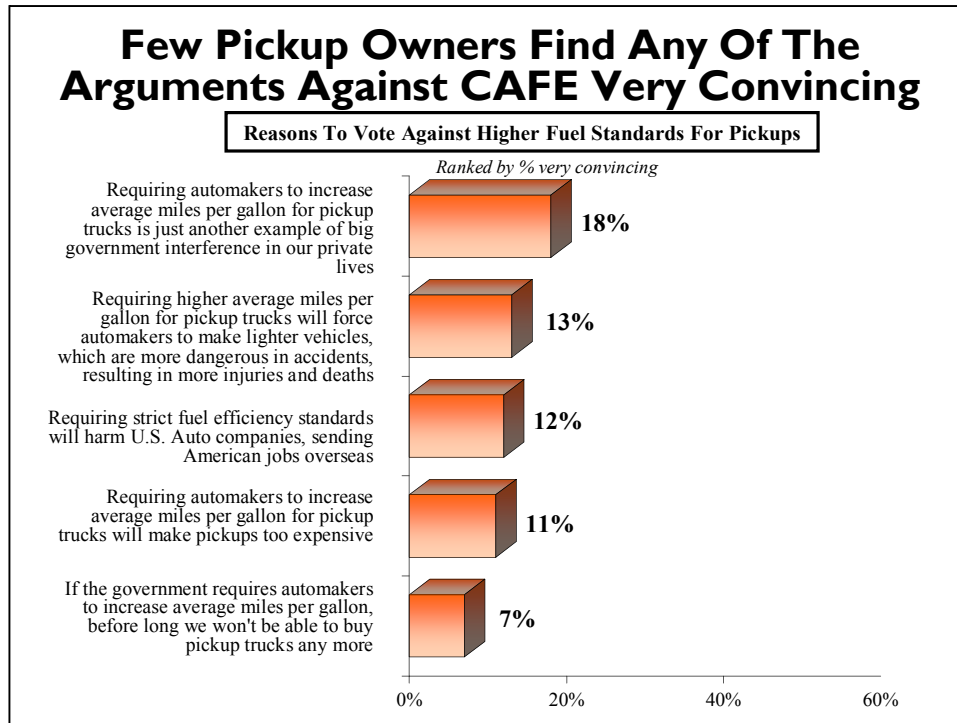


Forty percent (40%) of pickup owners said an argument that CAFE would reduce the carbon pollution that causes global warming² is a “very convincing” reason to support stricter fuel economy standards. Thirty-two percent (32%) of pickup owners responded “very convincing” to the argument that stricter CAFE standards would increase national security by reducing U.S. dependence on foreign oil³, while 31% found an argument that stricter CAFE standards would create jobs by creating new technologies⁴ very convincing.

² “Requiring automakers to increase average miles per gallon for pickup trucks would mean that vehicles burned less gas, reducing the carbon pollution that causes global warming”

³ “Requiring automakers to increase average miles per gallon for pickup trucks will increase our national security by making us less dependent on Middle East oil.”

⁴ “Requiring automakers to increase average miles per gallon for pickup trucks will create new jobs by creating new fuel-saving technologies.”



By contrast, even the strongest argument against stricter CAFE standards -- that they represent big government interference⁵ -- was “very” convincing to just 18% of pickup owners. Thus, the *most* compelling argument *against* CAFE was convincing to 14 percent fewer people than the *least* compelling argument *in favor*.

Other reputedly strong arguments against increasing pickups’ fuel efficiency standards were even weaker. Just 13%

found an argument that CAFE would force automakers to make lighter, more dangerous vehicles⁶ “very convincing.” The rest of the opposition arguments were persuasive to only about 1-in-10 pickup owners. These included arguments that CAFE would send jobs overseas⁷ (12% “very convincing”), that CAFE would make pickups too expensive⁸ (11% “very convincing”), and that CAFE would cause automakers to stop making pickups⁹ (7% “very convincing”).

OPPOSING STRICTER CAFE STANDARDS IS A SERIOUS POLITICAL LIABILITY

Even after hearing strong arguments against CAFE, and even after being told that auto companies are telling Members of Congress to oppose higher fuel efficiency standards because pickup owners oppose them¹⁰, nearly three-quarters still say they want Members of Congress to vote “Yes” on CAFE. Seventy three percent (73%) of pickup owners want their Member of Congress to vote for CAFE, (including 56% who feel that way “strongly”) compared to just 15% who say Members should vote against CAFE (7% strongly).

⁵ “Requiring automakers to increase average miles per gallon for pickup trucks is just another example of big government interference in our private lives, taking away our freedom to choose to drive whatever kind of vehicles we want to.”

⁶ “Requiring higher average miles per gallon for pickup trucks will force automakers to make lighter vehicles, which are more dangerous in accidents, resulting in more injuries and deaths.”

⁷ “Requiring strict fuel efficiency standards will harm U.S. auto companies, sending American jobs overseas.”

⁸ “Requiring automakers to increase average miles per gallon for pickup trucks will make pickups too expensive.”

⁹ “If the government requires automakers to increase average miles per gallon, before long we won’t be able to buy pickup trucks any more.”

¹⁰ “Auto companies that oppose higher fuel efficiency standards are telling Congress that they should oppose higher fuel efficiency standards because pickup truck owners oppose them. Do you think Members of Congress should vote for or against higher fuel efficiency standards?”

Pickup owners clearly understand the environmental impact of stricter CAFE standards as well as its central role in reducing our dependence on foreign oil, which in turn enhances our national security. Pickup truck owners thus interpret a vote against CAFE not as an effort to protect their interests, but rather as a vote against America's national security and environmental imperatives.