



CAFE AND SAFETY

**A Poll Prepared for Competitive Enterprise Institute by the polling company™
February 25, 2002**

National Survey of 1,001 Adults; Margin of Error = \pm 3.0%

As the debate over federal fuel economy standards has heated up in recent months, a number of polls have been released purporting to show high public support for increasing these standards. To our knowledge, however, none of these polls has informed those being surveyed about CAFE's impact on traffic safety. None, for example, have described the National Academy of Sciences' finding, in the report it released last August, that CAFE contributes to between 1,300 and 2,600 traffic deaths annually through its downsizing effect on cars.

The results being released today demonstrate that, once the public learns of these findings, its view of this program changes drastically. Public support for the current CAFE program drops almost to the break-even point. More importantly, by a plurality of 48 percent, the public opposes making CAFE more stringent.

These results are consistent with the findings of our 1999 poll on this same issue, which similarly indicated that information about CAFE's safety effects shifts public sentiment on this program. The results of the 1999 poll are summarized at <http://www.cei.org/gencon/003,02322.cfm>. Additional information on this issue can be found on our new CAFE Cafe, at www.cei.org.

Below are the results of CEI's latest poll, conducted this month.

1. There is a federal law that requires every auto maker to meet a specified average mile-per-gallon fuel standard for its new vehicles. This means that, if you take **all** the new **vehicles** sold by an auto company in a given year, the average miles per gallon for those vehicles **must** meet the government standard.

Supporters of this law say that it is necessary to conserve gasoline, reduce the threat of global warming, and help us to become less dependent on foreign oil.

Opponents of this law say that it is not effective, that it raises the prices of vehicles, restricts consumer choice, and threatens American jobs.

Would you say that you are very familiar, somewhat familiar, not very familiar or not familiar at all with the federal law that requires every auto maker to meet a specified average mile-per-gallon fuel standard for its new vehicles.

51% TOTAL FAMILIAR

14% VERY FAMILIAR
37% SOMEWHAT FAMILIAR

47% TOTAL UNFAMILIAR

19% NOT VERY FAMILIAR
28% NOT FAMILIAR AT ALL

1% DO NOT KNOW/UNSURE (VOLUNTEERED)

2. Based on what you know about these federal fuel standards, do you support or oppose them?

61% TOTAL SUPPORT

32% STRONGLY SUPPORT
29% SOMEWHAT SUPPORT

22% TOTAL OPPOSE

11% SOMEWHAT OPPOSE
11% STRONGLY OPPOSE

17% DO NOT KNOW/UNSURE/DEPENDS (VOLUNTEERED)

* REFUSED (VOLUNTEERED)

Now, I will read you a few facts that have been researched and are true. For each, please tell me if those facts would make you more likely to support or oppose the current federal fuel standards.

3. Many traffic safety experts say that, in general, larger, heavier vehicles are safer than smaller ones. The federal fuel standards, however restrict sales of such larger, heavier vehicles. Knowing this, would you be more likely to support or oppose the current federal fuel standards.

47% TOTAL SUPPORT

23% MUCH MORE LIKELY TO SUPPORT
24% SOMEWHAT MORE LIKELY TO SUPPORT

39% TOTAL OPPOSE

19% SOMEWHAT MORE LIKELY TO OPPOSE
20% MUCH MORE LIKELY TO OPPOSE

5% SAME/NO DIFFERENCE (VOLUNTEERED)

10% DO NOT KNOW/UNSURE/DEPENDS (VOLUNTEERED)

1% REFUSED (VOLUNTEERED)

4. This past summer, a panel of the National Academy of Sciences issued a report finding that by restricting sales of large vehicles, the federal fuel standards contribute to the deaths of 1,300 to 2,600 people in traffic accidents in this country each year. Knowing this, would you be more likely to support or oppose the current federal fuel standards?

42% TOTAL SUPPORT

20% MUCH MORE LIKELY TO SUPPORT

22% SOMEWHAT MORE LIKELY TO SUPPORT

39% TOTAL OPPOSE

18% SOMEWHAT MORE LIKELY TO OPPOSE

21% MUCH MORE LIKELY TO OPPOSE

6% SAME/NO DIFFERENCE (VOLUNTEERED)

12% DO NOT KNOW/UNSURE/DEPENDS (VOLUNTEERED)

1% REFUSED (VOLUNTEERED)

5. Now, suppose for a moment that the current federal law was changed so that the mile-per-gallon standard were to become even higher, further restricting the sale of larger, heavier vehicles. Would you support or oppose changing the current law to make the federal fuel standards stricter than the current standards?

43% TOTAL SUPPORT

25% STRONGLY SUPPORT

18% SOMEWHAT SUPPORT

48% TOTAL OPPOSE

20% SOMEWHAT OPPOSE

28% STRONGLY OPPOSE

9% DO NOT KNOW/UNSURE/DEPENDS (VOLUNTEERED)

1% REFUSED (VOLUNTEERED)

6. In deciding whether or not to change this law so that the federal fuel standards would become even stricter than the current standards, which of the following is the most important factor to consider?

20% ITS EFFECT ON OUR USE OF FOREIGN OIL
19% ITS EFFECT ON AMERICAN JOBS
15% ITS EFFECT ON TRAFFIC SAFETY
14% ITS EFFECT ON GLOBAL WARMING
11% ITS EFFECT ON GASOLINE CONSUMPTION
5% ITS EFFECT ON VEHICLE PRICES

6% ALL (VOLUNTEERED)
3% COMBINATION (VOLUNTEERED)
2% NONE (VOLUNTEERED)
7% DO NOT KNOW/UNSURE/DEPENDS (VOLUNTEERED)

7. Do you own or operate a sport utility vehicle?

74% NO
23% YES, OWN
2% YES, OPERATE

* DO NOT KNOW/UNSURE/DEPENDS (VOLUNTEERED)
* REFUSED (VOLUNTEERED)

8. (IF YES IN QUESTION 7) Which of the following reasons was the MOST important reason in your decision to own or operate a sport utility vehicle?
N=249

28% MORE SPACE FOR PASSENGERS AND CARGO
22% GREATER SAFETY/RELIABILITY/REPUTATION
19% ABILITY TO TRAVEL IN SNOW OR ON ROUGH ROADS
10% COST/REBATE/GOOD DEAL ECONOMICALLY/LOW FINANCING RATE
6% FOR FUN OR LEISURE

8% COMBINATION (VOLUNTEERED)
4% ALL (VOLUNTEERED)
2% NONE (VOLUNTEERED)
1% DO NOT KNOW/UNSURE/CAN'T REMEMBER (VOLUNTEERED)
1% REFUSED (VOLUNTEERED)