

Appendix A. Analysis Request Letter

JEFF SESSIONS
ALABAMA

COMMITTEES:
ARMED SERVICES
JUDICIARY
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES
BUDGET

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0104

October 17, 2008

The Honorable Samuel Bodman
Secretary
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Secretary Bodman:

Currently, diesel refined from crude oil is the most widely used transportation fuel in the world. Diesel fuel is critically important to America's economy. Nearly all trucks, delivery vehicles, buses, trains, ships, boats and barges, farm, construction and military vehicles and equipment have diesel engines. What's more, the price of diesel fuel affects the cost of food because nearly everything we buy in the supermarket is shipped across the country by trucks.

Diesel fuel is more efficient than other fuels. According to Popular Mechanics, the next generation of clean diesel vehicles runs approximately 38 percent farther on a gallon of fuel than similar hybrid models. The magazine found that a 2007 Volkswagen Polo Bluemotion diesel automobile travels farther on a gallon of fuel than a 2007 Toyota Prius hybrid. VW model also emits 5% fewer greenhouse gases per mile than the Toyota. Diesel vehicles also last longer than gasoline-powered vehicles. In addition to being fuel efficient, diesel-powered vehicles release fewer CO2 emissions than similar hybrids and gasoline engines. According to the Popular Mechanics field test, the VW model tested by the magazine emits 5% fewer greenhouse gases per mile than a Toyota Prius.

Diesel vehicles run on ultra-low sulfur diesel that is 97% cleaner than older diesel fuel. New diesel technology also reduces carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxide, and other particulate emissions levels. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, if 33 percent of American drivers switched to diesel vehicles, oil consumption in the United States would be reduced by approximately 1.5 million barrels of oil a day, which could cut imports by an estimated 10%.

Yet despite these attributes diesel vehicles are not widely available in the U.S. According to the automotive consulting firm R.L. Polk & Company, only approximately 3.5% of automobiles sold in the U.S. are diesel. In Europe, approximately 50% of automobiles sold are diesel. Currently, the U.S. fleet of refineries is geared to produce gasoline.

I am thus writing to request that the Energy Information Administration (EIA) analyze the environmental and energy efficiency attributes of diesel fuel. Specifically, I would like to know how diesel fueled vehicles compare to similar gasoline fueled, E-85 fueled, and hybrid vehicles. Are they more fuel efficient? Do they emit less carbon dioxide? When and how was the decision made in this country to rely primarily on gasoline as a transportation fuel instead of diesel? Who made this decision? What are the technical, economic, regulatory, environmental, or other obstacles to increasing the usage of diesel fueled vehicles? Does the Department of Energy have any recommendations relating to whether or not we should have more diesel cars in our fleet?

I appreciate your consideration of my request, and I look forward to your timely response. Please do not hesitate to contact me or James Wallner, of my staff, at (202) 224-3972 should you have any questions.

Very Truly Yours



Jeff Sessions
United States Senator

Cc: the Honorable Howard Gruenspecht
Lisa Epifani