



THEODORE R. KULONGOSKI
GOVERNOR

June 5, 2006

The Honorable Ron Wyden
United States Senate
230 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510-3703

Dear Senator Wyden:

The single most important step the federal government can take to reduce the country's reliance on foreign oil would be to increase fuel efficiency standards. I am very concerned that HR 5359, as passed out of committee, does not do enough to increase passenger vehicle fuel efficiency standards. In fact, under the guise of giving the President direct authority to raise gas mileage standards, the proposal actually represents a step backward in efforts to increase fuel efficiency, because it repeals the existing standard of 27.5 mpg.

Fortunately, a workable alternative is available. Please join me in supporting ongoing efforts to amend H. 5359 and establish a fleetwide fuel efficiency standard of 33 mpg by 2016. According to a recent report issued by the Oregon State Public Interest Research Group (OSPIRG), a 33-mpg standard would save Oregonians approximately \$223 million annually in fuel costs. In addition, the Union of Concerned Scientists estimates that American consumers would experience a fuel-related savings of least \$19 billion by 2015, and \$79 billion by 2025. Such a standard also would cut pollution that leads to global warming by 84 million metric tons by 2015, and 344 million metric tons by 2025.

We have clear and compelling historical evidence that meaningful vehicle efficiency standards contribute directly to energy independence. In the late 1970s, oil imports accounted for almost 50 percent of the nation's oil use. Following adoption of fuel efficiency standards, oil imports as a percentage of total oil use gradually declined to around 20 percent by the mid-1980s. Unfortunately, over the past 20 years, the standards were not updated, and the nation's oil imports steadily rose. Today they exceed 10 million barrels of oil per day and comprise about 60 percent of our total oil use.

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At the state level, I am working hard to reduce harmful vehicle emissions and promote renewable energy. Later this month the Environmental Quality Commission (EQC) will decide whether to make permanent the temporary rule it passed last December adopting cleaner tailpipe standards for Oregon. I asked the EQC to consider these improved standards because they will lead to more fuel efficient vehicles in Oregon, resulting in fuel savings for Oregon drivers, cleaner air and lower greenhouse gas emissions.

I also have championed several clean diesel initiatives in Oregon that will result in less engine-idling in commercial trucks, which will produce fuel savings for Oregon truckers and a cleaner environment. In addition, I will introduce legislation in 2007 to increase production and use of ethanol and biodiesel.

The fact remains, however, that the first and best step toward energy independence is ensuring the most efficient use of the oil and gas we use today. Only the federal government has authority to adopt specific fuel efficiency standards. As Oregonians suffer through the worst gas prices in history, please join me in supporting a fuel efficiency standard of 33-mpg.

Thank you for your attention to this request. If you need additional information, please contact Sarah Bittleman at (202) 624-7765.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Theodore R. Kulongoski". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'T'.

THEODORE R. KULONGOSKI
Governor

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