

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20515

July 20, 2000

President William Jefferson Clinton  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to urge you to work with Congress to implement the Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) law. The program is critical to reducing U.S. dependence on foreign oil, cutting air and carbon dioxide pollution, and saving consumers money at the gas pump. We want to work with you to ensure that the American people can benefit from improved CAFE standards.

Since 1995, the CAFE-freeze rider has been inserted in the House version of the Transportation Appropriations bills and the Senate has agreed to this language in conference. The rider prohibits the Department of Transportation from examining the need to raise CAFE standards. Current CAFE standards have stagnated for nearly a decade. While the standard for cars is at 27.5 miles per gallon, the standard for heavily polluting sport utility vehicles (SUV's) and other light trucks lags behind at 20.7 miles per gallon.

Because of the increasing number of light trucks, the average fuel economy of all new passenger vehicles is now at its lowest point since 1980, while fuel consumption is at its highest. The freeze rider denies the purchasers of SUV's and other light trucks the benefits of existing fuel saving technologies.

The current standards save more than three million barrels of oil a day, and save the owner of an average new car \$3,000 at the pump. However, we still use about 17 million barrels a day, contributing about \$50 billion to our merchandise trade deficit. Improved standards will reduce oil consumption, benefitting the economy and our nations energy security.

Higher standards also will translate into additional dollar savings for consumers. A substantial increase in CAFE standards would result in a net increase of 244,000 jobs nationwide, with 47,000 of these in the auto industry, according to a study by the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy.

Finally, improved standards will reduce pollution, including cancer-causing hydrocarbons. America's cars and light trucks are responsible for 20 percent of U.S. carbon dioxide pollution which causes global warming.