

Speed Limits—Slow Down and Slow Pollution

Recommendation

Enact a national speed limit not to exceed 65 miles per hour and govern truck speeds at no more than 68 miles per hour for new vehicles.

Background

An increase in truck speeds means a higher rate of fuel consumption and more pollutants released into the air. A 13 percent reduction in the speed of a truck from 75 mph down to 65 mph will lead to a 27 percent improvement in fuel consumption as aerodynamic drag is reduced. A truck moving at 75 mph and getting 5.1 miles per gallon will see an improvement in fuel economy to 6.5 mpg by dropping its speed to 65 mph.

Impact

Bringing speed limits for trucks down to 65 mph would, at a minimum, save **2.8 billion gallons of diesel fuel** and **reduce CO₂ emissions by 31.5 million tons** in a decade.

Limiting car speeds to 65mph would, at a minimum, reduce gasoline consumption by **8.7 billion gallons** and drop in **CO₂ emissions by 84.7 million tons** over the same 10-year period.

The ATA believes the potential for fuel savings and a reduction in carbon emissions could be even more significant if this policy commitment is matched by improved enforcement of speed limits for all vehicles that will bring down average speeds across the nation.



Idling—Keeping The Wheels Rolling

Recommendation

Pursue a federal solution that reduces non-discretionary idling through highway infrastructure improvements and reduces discretionary idling through incentives for technology improvements.

Background

There are two types of idling:

Non-discretionary idling refers to trucks stuck in traffic that churn out emissions without moving. The trucking industry is constantly looking for new technological aids to avoid congested bottlenecks and to find the fastest routes from depot to delivery destination that bypass the busiest traffic hot spots.

Discretionary idling refers to the practice of keeping the engine running to keep truck cabins warm or cool while the driver is resting. New technologies, including auxiliary power units, are available that will reduce diesel fuel consumption by the truck's engine.

Impact

Of the **38 billion gallons** of diesel fuel consumed by the trucking industry in 2005, about **1.1 billion gallons** (roughly 3 percent) of this total was consumed while trucks were idling. The progress made on reducing both types of idling can contribute to a major reduction in this part of the industry's contribution to overall emissions.

According to EPA estimates, long-duration truck idling now emits **13.3 million tons of CO₂ annually**. Given the numerous options currently available to fleets to minimize idling, the trucking industry has the potential to reduce associated **CO₂ emissions by 67 to 133 million tons** over a 10-year period.



Fuel Efficiency—Getting Smart with Diesel

Recommendation

Encourage carrier and shipper participation in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's SmartWaySM Transport Partnership program as an important strategy for reducing carbon.

Background

Fuel efficiency improvement is about reducing the amount of fuel consumed by a truck fleet relative to the amount of cargo being moved.

The focus of the trucking industry's efforts to improve fuel efficiency is SmartWaySM, the successful partnership between the EPA and the freight industry. By 2012, this initiative aims to reduce between 33 - 66 million metric tons of CO₂ emissions.

Trucking companies signed up to the program are asked to develop three-year plans committing to cutting fuel use and greenhouse-gas emissions in exchange for SmartWaySM membership and the right to use the prestigious program logo.

Impact

SmartWaySM Program trucking partners will reduce fuel consumption in 2008 by an estimated **554 million gallons of fuel**. In 2012, the EPA predicts SmartWaySM participants will reduce their carbon emissions by **48 million tons of CO₂**. The greenhouse gas reductions by SmartWaySM partners in 2012 are projected to equal 11 percent of the amount of CO₂ generated by the trucking industry in 2005



Congestion Reduction–The Cost Of Getting Nowhere

Recommendation

Advocate for initiatives to improve highway infrastructure and reduce congestion as a preferred and effective method of further reducing carbon emissions. The optimal way to pay for the needed infrastructure improvements is through a fuels tax increase dedicated to paying for highway improvements that reduce congestion.

Background

Every year, American cars and trucks burn up to 3 billion gallons of fuel in traffic jams. In economic terms, stop-and-go driving prevents truck drivers from meeting their deadlines – and from making a living. In environmental terms, the cost of getting nowhere is almost 45 million tons of CO₂ annually emitted into the atmosphere.

Dealing with congestion is a long-term issue. With that in mind ATA proposes a 20-year strategy. For the first five years, ATA recommends focusing money and effort on fixing the most critical bottlenecks in and around major metropolitan areas including Atlanta, Phoenix, Chicago and Los Angeles. Thereafter, the focus would shift to the broader challenge of increasing overall highway capacity. Ultimately, ATA recommends developing truck-only corridors in key areas where trucks can drive freely without encountering commuter traffic.

Impact

ATA estimates that if all 473 areas of congestion identified in a Texas Transportation Institute study were eliminated, the trucking industry could save **4.1 billion gallons of fuel** and reduce CO₂ emissions by **45.2 million tons** over a 10-year period. ATA also estimates that cars would save 27.7 billion gallons of fuel and reduce CO₂ emissions by 268.5 million tons over the same timeframe.

Reducing congestion offers one of the most viable strategies for reducing carbon emissions but also one of the most expensive options. ATA recommends that if necessary, costs can be met through a fuel tax, with revenue dedicated to the Highway Trust Fund.



Truck Combinations—Getting the Size Right

Recommendation

Promote the broader use of more productive truck combinations to reduce emissions of carbon and other pollutants, mitigate congestion, and conserve fuel.

Background

According to the Federal Highway Administration, allowing higher vehicle weights, as is permitted in Canada and Europe, or increasing the use of longer combination vehicles will reduce the number of trucks on the road. This means fewer total truck miles traveled, ton-per-mile fuel consumption savings, lower carbon emissions, and less highway congestion for both trucks and cars.

Recent research by the American Transportation Research Institute showed that fuel efficiency improvements and environmental benefits can be achieved through the operation of higher productivity vehicles. For almost every vehicle configuration studied, operating at higher weights allowed freight payloads to be increased at a greater rate than the additional fuel required to move the heavier load.

Impact

Based on a U.S. Department of Transportation analysis of broader operation of single trailer trucks with a maximum gross weight of 97,000 pounds, as well as heavier double 33-foot trailers in more states, the ATA estimates that over a 10-year period this would save more than 20.5 billion gallons of diesel and 227.3 million tons of CO₂. The Western Longer Combination Vehicle Harmonization has the potential to save 6.1 billion gallons diesel and 67.4 million tons in CO₂ emissions.



Fuel Economy—Making Diesel Go Farther

Recommendation

Support national fuel economy standards—setting technologically feasible fuel economy standards for medium and heavy duty trucks can reduce fuel consumption if they do not compromise the performance of the vehicles.

Background

For highway vehicles, fuel economy is defined as how much fuel a vehicle consumes to travel a specified distance, usually expressed as miles per gallon.

The Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 requires the Secretary of Transportation to prescribe fuel economy standards for commercial medium- and heavy-duty on-highway vehicles. The trucking industry supports improved fuel economy for these vehicles through minimum government standards so long as such regulations do not compromise truck performance and are technologically and economically feasible. The industry believes vehicle fuel economy can be improved, given a lead time of 36 months, creating a stable regulatory environment where revisions are at least 5 years apart.

It is in the commercial interests of the trucking industry to make progress on fuel economy and operators across the country are coming up with new ways to improve average fuel consumption through a range of engineering, driving techniques (which can save up to 35 percent on fuel consumption) aerodynamic, and design improvements.

Impact

Improvements in fuel economy will lead to lower emissions and reduced consumption of fuel. The trucking industry is already taking action on fuel economy with operators across the country coming up with new ways to improve average fuel consumption through a range of engineering innovations, driving techniques, investment in the latest engines on the market, aerodynamic features, and lightweight design improvements.

As part of the 2007 act, the National Academy of Sciences will develop a report evaluating vehicle fuel economy standards, including an analysis of existing and potential technologies that may be used practically to improve medium-duty and heavy-duty truck fuel economy. When the standards have been set and the new regulations have been rolled out we will have a better idea of the long-term impact on fuel consumption and emissions.

