



THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

April 27, 2006

The Honorable Bill Frist  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

*Bill:*  
~~Dear Mr. Leader:~~

At the President's request, I hereby ask that the Congress take prompt action to authorize the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to reform fuel economy standards for passenger automobiles for the first time. Along with other previously announced energy policies, the President believes these actions are critical to promoting our Nation's energy security and independence.

The Administration has already shown strong leadership on fuel economy. The DOT raised the light truck and sport utility vehicle standards twice in the last four years, including a recently announced rulemaking that will save nearly 11 billion gallons of gasoline, eliminate incentives to make lighter and therefore more dangerous vehicles, and encourage all manufacturers, not just a few, to deploy fuel saving technologies.

Our National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has the technical expertise to regulate fuel economy in a manner that is cost effective, based on sound science and safeguards vehicle occupants. Substantial increases in CAFE standards under the current single standard approach would increase fatalities on America's highways, raise healthcare costs and reduce employment. As a result, the Administration would oppose any increase in passenger car CAFE standards without corresponding reform.

In addition, it is imperative that CAFE standards be set through an administrative process based on sound science and data. The administrative process provides safety and other public interest groups, the auto industry and the general public an opportunity to develop and provide NHTSA with policy suggestions and detailed technical, economic, and other relevant data necessary for reforming the passenger car CAFE system and setting new CAFE standards.

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The Honorable Bill Frist

I commend Congress for their strong interest in improving our country's energy independence, and I look forward to working with you to achieve this important objective.

An identical letter has been sent to the Minority Leader of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Norman Y. Mineta". The signature is stylized with a large initial "N" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Norman Y. Mineta