

**CSI/40MPG.ORG: “FUEL-EFFICIENT CAR GAP” GROWING AS U.S. FALLS TO TWO 40MPG+ VEHICLES, WHILE NUMBER OF GAS-SIPPING CARS UNAVAILABLE IN U.S. RISES TO WELL OVER 100**

*Survey: Over 2.5 Million Americans Want Fuel-Efficient Vehicles ... But Have Been Frustrated; Four Out of Five Want Fuel-Efficient Vehicles Now Off Limits to Them, Seek Hill Action.*

WASHINGTON, D.C.//February 14, 2007//America is now stuck in reverse when it comes to fuel-efficient vehicles and unhappy U.S. consumers want Congress to take action to correct the situation, according to new research from the Civil Society Institute (CSI)/40MPG.org and a national opinion poll conducted for CSI by Opinion Research Corporation (ORC).

In an update of its own December 2005 research, CSI/40MPG.org found that the number of vehicles sold in the U.S. that achieve combined gas mileage of at least 40 miles per gallon (MPG) has dropped from five in 2005 to just two in 2007, while the ranks of such vehicles available overseas -- but not sold in the U.S. -- rose from 86 to 113 in the same time period. Adding insult to injury, nearly two thirds (74 or 65 percent) of the 113 highly fuel-efficient car models that are unavailable to American consumers are either made by U.S. auto manufacturers (e.g., Ford and GM) or foreign manufacturers with substantial U.S. sales operations (e.g., Volkswagen, Nissan and Toyota). For the full CSI/40MPG.org “fuel-efficient car gap” chart, go to [http://www.40mpg.org/pdfs/021407\\_fuel\\_efficient\\_vehicle\\_gap.xls](http://www.40mpg.org/pdfs/021407_fuel_efficient_vehicle_gap.xls).

The ORC national opinion survey conducted for CSI/40MPG.org shows that there is a potential market of at least 2.5 million U.S. consumers for the introduction of the fuel-efficient cars now being sold overseas but not in this country. Nearly nine out of 10 Americans (88 percent) -- including roughly three out of five (58 percent) who feel strongly -- think U.S. consumers should have access to the dozens of more fuel-efficient cars available from U.S. automakers overseas -- but not in this country. Similarly, more than four out of five Americans (81 percent) -- including half who agree strongly -- think U.S. consumers should have access to the dozens of more fuel-efficient cars available from foreign automakers overseas - but not in this country.

U.S. consumers want action by Congress to increase U.S. fuel efficiency standards now. According to the CSI/40MPG.org survey, four out of five Americans -- including 86 percent of Democrats and 76 percent of Republicans and independents -- say that they would support “Congress taking the lead to achieve the highest possible fuel efficiency as quickly as possible” by raising the fuel-efficiency requirements for U.S. vehicles to achieve the goal of 40 miles per gallon. More than three quarters of Americans (77 percent) – including 81 percent of Democrats, 72 percent of Republicans and 77 percent of independents -- think Congress “could help to save troubled U.S. automakers by requiring the same kind of higher fuel efficiency that already is being achieved in Europe,” where “foreign automakers offer far more vehicles that achieve 35-40 miles per gallon or more than do U.S. automakers.”

CSI President Pam Solo said: **“We have to face the unpleasant facts here: America is needlessly losing the race to develop the best fuel-efficient technology and then deliver it to the American consumer, which wants these cars and other vehicles that would use less**

**imported fuel and create less global-warming pollution. The Europeans, Japanese and Chinese are already committed to far more aggressive MPG standards than we are in the United States. Congress needs to show some leadership now and insist on a 40 miles per gallon standard now – not 10 years from now when it will be too late to save Detroit from its worst impulses.”**

40MPG.org spokesperson Ailis Aaron Wolf, co-editor of “The Ultimate Car Book 2001” and “The Used Car Book 2000-2001” said: **“The notion that highly fuel-efficient cars don’t exist in the commercial marketplace or that there is no market for such vehicles in the U.S. are the twin myths that Detroit has continued to rely on to its own detriment. The research and survey we are releasing today make it clear that the technology already exists, the vehicles are on the road elsewhere around the world and the demand for these vehicles from U.S. consumers exists. The only thing that does not exist today is the will in Congress and Detroit to raise federal fuel-efficiency standards to the level that they belong.”**

ORC Senior Research Associate Graham Hueber said: **“There is a potential market of 2.5 million or more U.S. consumers for the introduction of fuel-efficient cars now being sold overseas, but not in this country. In a level that remains unchanged from a November 2005 CSI/40MPG.org survey asking the same question, more than one in 10 American adults (12 percent) say they ‘have faced a delay in getting the fuel-efficient car they wanted or were concerned enough about reports of delays not to proceed with purchasing such a vehicle.’ Significantly, this level of frustrated consumers is nearly equal to those reporting ‘they had no concerns and were able to buy the fuel-efficient car they wanted (14 percent).’”**

### **OTHER CAR RESEARCH DATA**

Other key findings of the CSI/40MPG.org research on the “fuel-efficient car gap” included the following:

\* Outside of the U.S., there are 38 vehicles that get 50mpg or better and 34 of them use “clean diesel” technology. Only two U.S. vehicles (the Toyota Prius and the Honda Civic Hybrid) are rated by the EPA as having 50mpg or better combined fuel efficiency. The 2007 levels are up overseas (from 34 in 2005) and flat in the U.S.

\* Overall, at least 161 vehicles not sold in the U.S. were found to achieve combined fuel efficiency of 35 mpg or better, up sharply from 129 in 2005. In the U.S., the number of vehicles getting 35 mpg or better fell from nine to six.

Some fuel-efficient vehicles identified by CSI/40MPG.org have both a diesel and a gas model over 40 mpg that aren’t sold in U.S. In other cases, some models have a gas version available in the U.S., but also offer a more fuel-efficient diesel version outside the U.S.

### **OTHER KEY SURVEY FINDINGS**

The ORC survey conducted for Civil Society Institute/40MPG.org is entitled, “Missing the Demand: U.S. Consumers and Foreign Fuel-Efficient Cars. Other key findings include:

\* 85 percent of Americans -- including 91 percent of Democrats, 77 percent of Republicans and 85 percent of Independents -- agree with the statement: "We need higher federal fuel-efficiency standards for vehicles now in order to conserve more energy, making us less dependent on Middle Eastern oil, and to reduce the ill effects of global warming."

\* In a level that remains unchanged from a November 2005 CSI/40MPG.org survey asking the same question, more than one in 10 American adults (12 percent) say they "have faced a delay in getting the fuel-efficient car they wanted or were concerned enough about reports of delays not to proceed with purchasing such a vehicle."

\* More than nine out of 10 Americans (92 percent) "expect gasoline prices to go back up in the near future" -- including over half (52 percent) who "definitely" expect such higher prices at the pump. Only one out of four Americans say that they are NOT taking "expected future gasoline price increases into consideration in thinking about buying a new vehicle."

\* 76 percent of Americans are as or more likely to "buy a hybrid or other more fuel-efficient vehicle" today than they were six months ago.

### **SURVEY METHODOLOGY**

Results are based on telephone interviews conducted among a sample of 1,014 adults (504 men and 510 women) age 18 and over, living in private households, in the continental United States. Interviewing by ORC was completed during the period of February 2-5, 2007. Completed interviews of 1,014 adults were weighted by four variables: age, sex, geographic region, and race, to ensure reliable and accurate representation of the total adult population. The margin of error at a 95 percent confidence level is plus or minus 3 percentage points for the sample of 1,014 adults. Smaller sub-groups will have larger error margins.

### **ABOUT CSI AND 40MPG.ORG**

The nonprofit and nonpartisan Civil Society Institute (<http://www.CivilSocietyInstitute.org>) is a think tank that serves as a catalyst for change by creating problem-solving interactions among people, and between communities, government and business that can help to improve society. CSI has conducted more than 15 major surveys since 2003 on auto and energy issues, including vehicle fuel-efficiency standards, consumer demand for hybrids/other highly-fuel efficient vehicles, global warming and renewable energy. CSI is the parent organization of 40MPG.org (<http://www.40MPG.org>) and the Hybrid Owners of America (<http://www.HybridOwnersofAmerica.org>).

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** A streaming audio recording of the news event will be available on the Web as of 6 p.m. ET on February 14, 2007 at <http://www.40MPG.org> and <http://www.CivilSocietyInstitute.org>.

