

**STATEMENT OF SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN  
RANKING MEMBER, SENATE COMMITTEE ON  
COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION HEARING ON  
HEARING ON REFORMING CORPORATE AVERAGE FUEL ECONOMY  
STANDARDS  
DECEMBER 6, 2001**

- I thank the Chairman for convening today's hearing to discuss Corporate Average Fuel Economy standards. The issue is a significant one and I hope today's testimony will provide this Committee with an in depth look at how to best address the issue in a manner that balances consumer, industry, and environmental interests.
- The debate over CAFE is complex because it involves the environment, public safety, and the economy. It involves tension between the consumer's choice to drive vehicles that perform to the owners standards and the environmental consequences that result from those choices. Moreover, higher CAFE standards may now play a more significant role in our discussions regarding efforts to decrease U.S. dependence on the importation of foreign oil.
- The recent NAS report concluded that the benefits resulting from CAFE type programs clearly warrant government intervention in the market. The report pointed out that CAFE has produced many positive results, including a reduction in the emission of greenhouse gases, a decreased dependence on foreign oil, and lower fuel consumption. At the same time, however, NAS reported that CAFE standards have probably resulted in increased traffic fatalities due to the downsizing and down weighing of vehicles by manufacturers in their efforts to comply with the standards.
- To properly address this issue requires a careful evaluation of new technologies, and the cost associated with implementing them into the fleet. I am hopeful that today's testimony will enable this committee to learn more about the technologies that exist to increase CAFE standards, and how the auto industry can implement that technology at minimal cost to the consumer and without compromising safety or performance. In particular, I hope the industry will speak to the research and development that they are currently engaged in, in their efforts to develop vehicles that are more fuel efficient.
- In conclusion, let me say that it is imperative that the Commerce Committee examine this issue in a comprehensive manner and formulate a balanced approach that achieves better fuel economy while at the same time providing consumers with choice and enhancing vehicle performance, without compromising passenger safety.
- Thank you Mr. Chairman, and I look forward to today's testimony.

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