

Grist

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America's new cars are more fuel-efficient than ever before

By [John Upton](#)

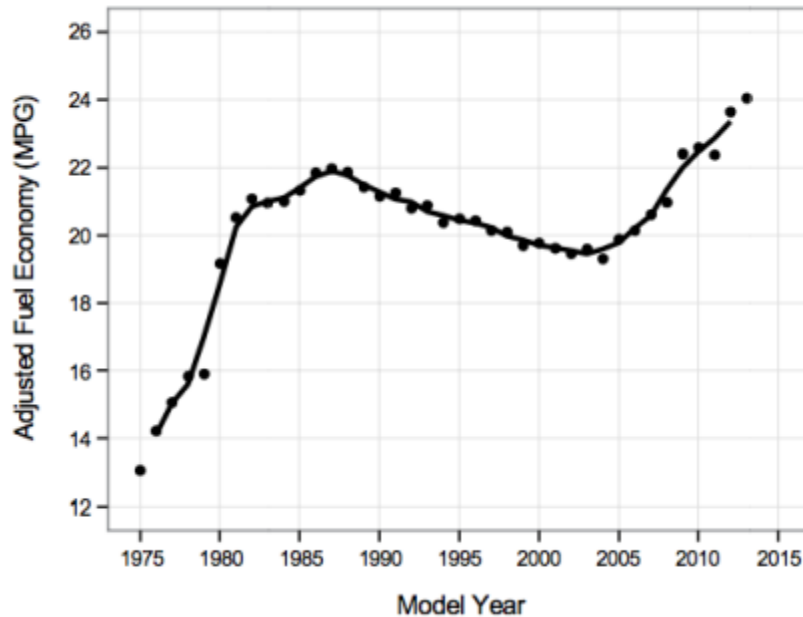


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The 1990s-style thirst for power that gave rise to America's fleet of gas-guzzling SUVs is being replaced by a hunger for fuel-efficient cars, helping auto manufacturers in 2012 beat their previous record for overall gas mileage.

The average model-year 2012 vehicle got 23.6 miles per gallon, according to a new [report from the EPA](#). OK, that's still pretty lame — but it's 1.2 mpg better than the previous year, the second-largest annual increase in history.

Adjusted Fuel Economy for MY 1975-MY 2013



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And Dan Becker of the Clean Climate Campaign points out that this improvement marks real progress made under Obama's new fuel-economy standards: "That's roughly 5% in the program's first year. We are on track to hitting the 54.5 mpg standard for 2025. This is a big deal."

The average new car last year had 222 horsepower. That's a helluva lot of horses, but nonetheless a reduction of eight relative to 2011, [according to the report](#). That helped improve overall mileage, as did a 150-pound reduction in the weight of the average car.

"More consumers value fuel economy than in the past," Christopher Grundler, director of the EPA's office of Transportation and Air Quality, [told the AP](#).

Here are more report highlights [from EPA](#):

Fuel economy has now increased in seven of the last eight years. ...

The large fuel economy improvement in model year 2012 is consistent with longer-term trends. ... While EPA does not yet have final data for model year 2013, preliminary projections are that fuel economy will rise by 0.4 mpg, and carbon dioxide emissions will decrease by 6 grams per mile in 2013.

EPA ... attributes much of the recent improvement to the rapid adoption of more efficient technologies such as gasoline direct injection engines, turbochargers, and advanced transmissions.

Consumers have many more high fuel economy choices due to these and other technologies, such as hybrid, diesel, electric, and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles. Consumers can choose from five times more car models with a combined city/highway fuel economy of 30 mpg or more, and from twice as many SUVs that achieve 25 mpg or more, compared to just five years ago.

Nearly every major automaker produced vehicles in 2012 that were more efficient than its models from the year before. Mazda now has the most efficient fleet, while Chrysler is the biggest laggard.

MY 2011–2013 Manufacturer Adjusted Fuel Economy and Adjusted CO₂ Emissions¹

| Manufacturer ² | MY 2011 Final | | MY 2012 Final | | | MY 2013 Preliminary | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| | Fuel Economy (MPG) | CO ₂ Emissions (g/mi) | Fuel Economy (MPG) | Change from MY 2011 (MPG) | CO ₂ Emissions (g/mi) | Change from MY 2011 (g/mi) | Fuel Economy (MPG) | CO ₂ Emissions (g/mi) |
| Mazda | 25.0 | 356 | 27.1 | +2.1 | 328 | -28 | 27.5 | 324 |
| Honda | 24.1 | 369 | 26.6 | +2.5 | 334 | -35 | 27.0 | 329 |
| Toyota | 24.1 | 369 | 25.6 | +1.5 | 347 | -22 | 25.2 | 352 |
| VW | 26.0 | 349 | 25.8 | -0.2 | 351 | +2 | 26.2 | 346 |
| Subaru | 23.9 | 372 | 25.2 | +1.3 | 352 | -20 | 26.2 | 339 |
| Nissan | 23.3 | 381 | 24.1 | +0.8 | 369 | -12 | 25.3 | 351 |
| BMW | 22.7 | 393 | 23.7 | +1.0 | 377 | -16 | 24.4 | 364 |
| Ford | 21.1 | 422 | 22.8 | +1.7 | 390 | -32 | 22.6 | 394 |
| GM | 20.7 | 429 | 21.7 | +1.0 | 410 | -19 | 22.0 | 404 |
| Daimler | 19.1 | 469 | 21.1 | +2.0 | 426 | -43 | 22.2 | 402 |
| Chrysler-Fiat | 19.4 | 458 | 20.1 | +0.7 | 442 | -16 | 21.6 | 411 |
| All | 22.4 | 398 | 23.6 | +1.2 | 376 | -22 | 24.0 | 370 |

¹ Adjusted CO₂ and fuel economy values reflect real world estimates and are not comparable to automaker standards compliance levels. Adjusted CO₂ values are, on average, about 25% higher than the unadjusted laboratory CO₂ values that form the starting point for GHG standards compliance, and adjusted fuel economy values are about 20% lower, on average, than unadjusted fuel economy values.

² Two manufacturers, Hyundai and Kia, are not included in rows in the table above due to a continuing investigation. On November 2, 2012, EPA announced that Hyundai and Kia would lower their fuel economy estimates for many vehicle models as the result of an EPA investigation of test data. Based on these corrected data, Hyundai's values are 27.2 mpg and 327 g/mi CO₂ for MY 2011, 28.3 mpg and 314 g/mi CO₂ for MY 2012, and 28.3 mpg and 315 g/mi CO₂ for MY 2013 (preliminary). Kia's values are 25.8 mpg and 345 g/mi CO₂ for MY 2011, 26.5 mpg and 336 g/mi CO₂ for MY 2012, and 27.3 mpg and 326 g/mi CO₂ for MY 2013 (preliminary). These corrected data for Hyundai and Kia are included in industry-wide or "All," values.

EPA

Source

- [Fuel Economy of New Vehicles Sets Record High / Fuel Economy Gains to Continue Under President Obama's Clean Car Programs](#), EPA
- [Cars, trucks hit record gas mileage last year](#), The Associated Press

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