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## Fuel Economy Hits 24.1 MPG, New High

### EPA Estimates 2013 New Cars, Trucks Can Travel Half Mile Farther on Gallon of Gasoline

By Joseph B. White

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Average fuel economy of 2013-model vehicles sold in the U.S. rose to 24.1 miles a gallon on an adjusted basis, up half a mile per gallon from the year earlier, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said on Wednesday.

The EPA's latest fuel economy trends report is expected to caution that the pace of improvement could slow sharply for 2014, according to Dan Becker of the Safe Climate Campaign, an environmental group.

"Auto makers should be embarrassed to put in such an appalling flat-line performance," Mr. Becker said in a statement.

The EPA's new fuel economy trends report highlights growing tension between the Obama administration, which has made its drive to slash greenhouse gas emissions from cars a cornerstone of its broader environmental policy, and auto makers, who are increasingly worried that consumers won't buy high-tech, fuel efficiency vehicles if gas prices remain relatively low.

Auto industry executives have been stepping up warnings that as U.S. gas prices drift down, consumers are being drawn to larger SUVs and trucks, and are less interested in paying higher prices for new technology to cut fuel consumption.

[Ford Motor](#) Co. [F -0.99%](#) executives warned investors last week that they expect profit margins in the company's North American auto business will be lower than previously forecast in part because consumers won't pay the full cost of mileage improvements. Its profit warning sent the company's shares into a tailspin.

The latest government fuel efficiency figures indicate auto makers are still well short of federal goals for the 2016 model year as well as the 54.5 mpg target set for 2025.

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