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CLIMATE

Breaking: Obama to raise new car fuel efficiency standard to 39 mpg by 2016 — The biggest step the U.S. government has ever taken to cut CO2.

BY [JOE ROMM](#) MAY 18, 2009 1:48 PM

UPDATE: The NYT story is not entirely accurate, and, separately, sources tell me there appears to be a little confusion as to exactly what mpg standard is set for what class of vehicles (see below).

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*UPDATE2: The numbers appear to be **39 mpg for cars, 30 mpg for light trucks** (see [here](#)).*

For all those who are worried that the Waxman-Markey clean energy bill represents the alpha and the omega of energy policy, the *NYT* [reports](#) today:

The Obama administration will issue new national requirements for the emissions and mileage of cars and light trucks in an effort to end a long-running conflict among the states, the federal government and auto manufacturers, industry officials said Monday.

President Obama will announce as early as Tuesday that he will combine California's tough new auto-emissions rules with the existing corporate average fuel economy standard to create a single new national standard, the officials said. As a result, cars and light trucks sold in the United States will be roughly 30 percent cleaner and more fuel-efficient by 2016.

I agree with Dan Becker of the Safe Climate Campaign (and formerly of Sierra club)

"This is a very big deal," said Daniel Becker

Kudos to team Obama for putting this deal together. Here are more details:



... the president would grant California's longstanding request that its tailpipe emissions standards be imposed nationally. That request was denied by the Bush administration but has been under review by top Obama administration officials since January.

The italicized sentence is inaccurate. California never asked that its emissions standard be imposed nationally, since, of course, it has no right to make such a request under the Clean Air Act. It merely asked to be allowed to have a separate, tougher emissions standard as the law allows. Other states may then choose between the California standard and the national standard.

But Mr. Obama is planning to go further, putting in place new mileage requirements to be administered by the Department of Transportation that would match the stringency of the California program....

“This is a very big deal,” said Daniel Becker of the Safe Climate Campaign, a group that has pushed for tougher mileage and emissions standards with the goal of curbing the heat-trapping gases that have been linked to global warming. “This is the single biggest step the American government has ever taken to cut greenhouse-gas emissions.”

... The current standards are 27.5 miles a gallon for cars and about 24 miles a gallon for trucks. The new mileage and emissions rules will gradually tighten, beginning with 2011 models, until they reach the 2016 standards.

The auto industry is not expected to challenge the rule, which provides two things they have long asked for: certainty on a timetable and a single national standard....

President Obama became personally involved in the issue because he is also trying to find a way to rescue the American automobile companies from their financial crisis....

Mr. Obama directed the Environmental Protection Agency in January to reconsider the Bush administration’s past rejection of the California application. The president also instructed the Transportation Department to draw up rules to supplement a 2007 law requiring a 40 percent improvement in gas mileage for autos and light trucks by 2020.

The Bush administration failed to write any regulations to enforce the 2007 law.

Daniel J. Weiss, an environmental policy analyst at the liberal Center for American Progress, said that under the White House plan, California would retain the ability to set its own emissions standards in the future when the current program expires.

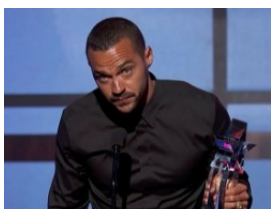
He also said that the new administration program was very close in language and intent to a provision in the climate change and energy bill now before the House Energy and Commerce Committee. That bill calls for a “harmonization” of the California and federal regulatory programs to provide a nationwide standard.

He said the standards were being written so that the car companies would already be on track to meet the standards set in the first few years of the program. The cars and trucks that will be sold in that period are already in the design phase. But starting in 2013 and 2014, the new rules will begin to bite, Mr. Weiss said.

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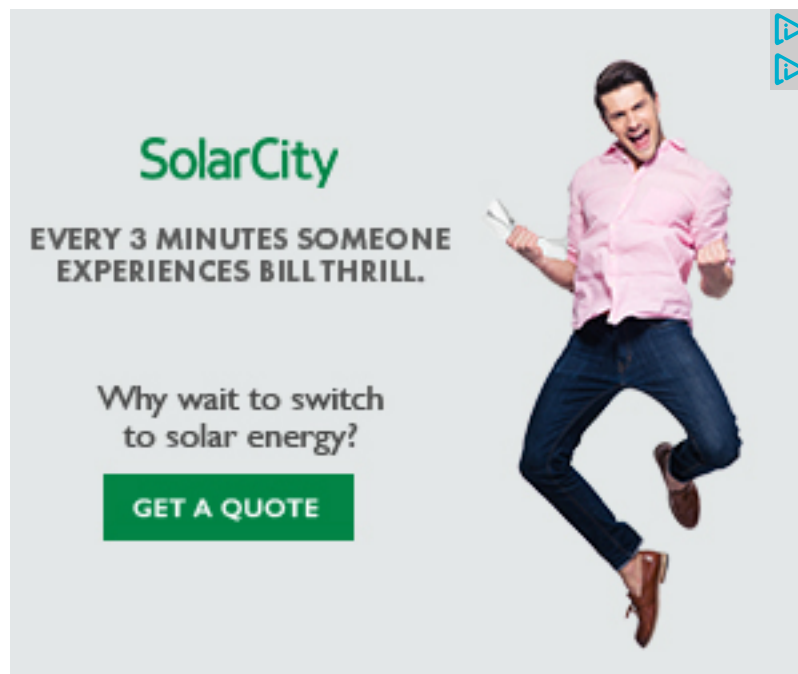
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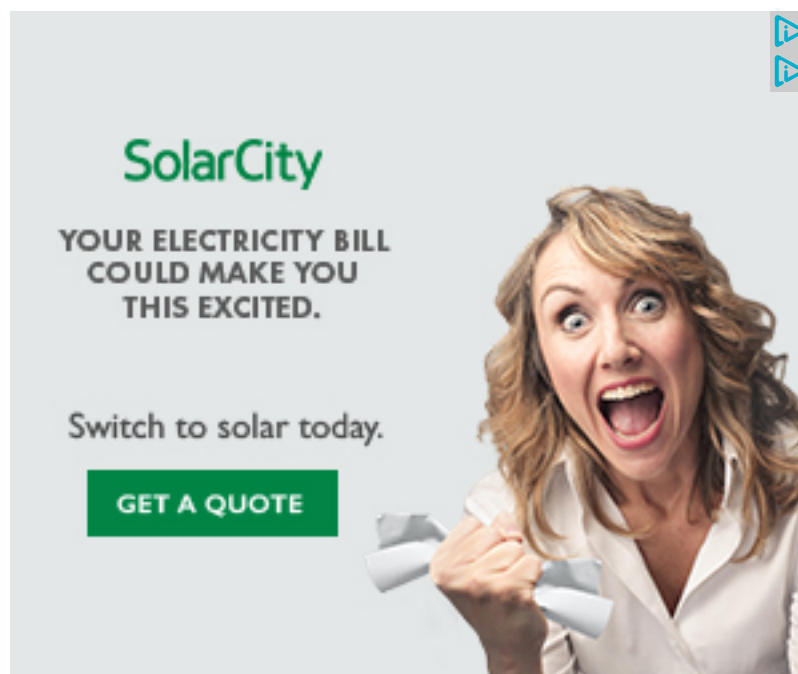
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A man in a pink shirt and blue jeans is jumping in the air with a wide, excited smile, holding a crumpled piece of paper.

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A woman with blonde hair is shown from the chest up, wearing a white shirt. She has a wide-eyed, excited expression and is tearing at a piece of paper, likely a bill.

From Climate Nexus

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