

Transport Topics

US Carmakers Hit Record Gas Mileage, but Below Fuel Standard

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EPA Lauds Figures; Other Climate Critics Less Impressed

Keith Laing
December 21, 2023

U.S. automakers achieved a record average of 26 miles per gallon for vehicles made during the 2022 model year, but still fell far short of current fuel standards, according to [data released Dec. 20](#) by the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#).

The figure, which is the most recent finalized data available, is 0.6 mpg higher than the 2021 model year, the EPA said. The agency's administrator, [Michael Regan](#), said the improved figure "highlights the historic progress made so far" by the auto industry "to reduce climate pollution and other harmful emissions."

The data comes as automakers have been pushing back on the Biden administration's efforts to increase fuel economy and spur faster adoption of electric vehicles. The [U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#) is weighing a proposal that would require carmakers to reach an average of about 58 miles per gallon.

Industry trade groups have said stricter rules would cost them billions in fines, while dealers warn that EV demand is softening.

The current rules, known as [Corporate Average Fuel Economy](#), or CAFE, call for fleetwide vehicle mileage average of 52 mpg by 2026, up from 40 mpg this year. The goal equates to roughly 41 mpg in real-world driving.

Automakers rely on a program that allows manufacturers to purchase credits from competitors that exceed the federal limits to meet the fuel-economy requirements. The system allows carmakers to claim an equivalent of more than 100 mpg for each EV in their lineup.

The program has benefited Tesla Inc., the only company that exceeds the current mileage requirement, according to the EPA. The company, which attributed \$286 million in earnings to automotive regulatory credits in the third quarter of 2023, achieves an average of 119 mpg.

Tesla's next nearest competitor is Hyundai, which averages 29.1 mpg, according to the agency.

[The Alliance for Automotive Innovation](#), which lobbies for most major automakers, [said in a post](#) on the social media platform X the EPA's figures tell "a really positive story about the U.S. auto fleet" and show electric vehicle adoption is growing.

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