

May 9, 2017

United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: Opposition to Draft Legislation Weakening Fuel Economy Standards

Dear Senator:

On behalf of Consumers Union, the policy and mobilization arm of Consumer Reports, I write to express opposition to draft legislation circulated by Senator Inhofe that would weaken the consumer benefits of the federal fuel economy standards. Billed as an effort to harmonize the different federal standards, the draft legislation would in fact give “extra” credit for vehicles sold years ago and discourage efficiency gains in larger vehicle classes.

The version of the bill supplied to InsideEPA offers automakers retroactive credit for improvements already made in earlier model years. The bill would also allow manufacturers to transfer credits from cars to trucks, reducing the need to deploy technologies in trucks and SUVs that have the most room for improvement and have been improving the fastest. Consumers Union’s research has shown that under current standards, truck owners would save \$4,800 over the life of their vehicle. These savings are likely to be much lower if this draft bill is were to become law.

The fuel economy program has been a success that has increased the number of fuel efficient vehicles available to consumers and saved consumers billions of dollars at the pump, even as the industry has experienced record sales and profits. Rolling back these efforts would mean consumers would spend more on fuel, rather than on local goods and services that boost the broader economy.

The proposed changes to the fuel economy program would reduce incentives for future innovation in fuel economy technology and ultimately burden consumers with higher fuel costs and harmful emissions. We urge you to oppose the bill and continue to move the country forward in our efforts to improve the fuel efficiency of our nation’s automotive fleet and reduce harmful pollution that threatens public health.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,



Shannon Baker-Branstetter, Policy Counsel
Consumers Union