

Ethanol Study Finds Consumers Want Ethanol



OMAHA, Neb. -- Across the country, 57 percent of American consumers feel that it is important to use ethanol as an additive to gasoline to ease the country's dependence on foreign oil, according to a study by the Ethanol Promotion and Information Council.

"These findings demonstrate more and more Americans are becoming aware of the reasons why they should choose ethanol-enriched gasoline," said Reece Nanfito, senior director of marketing for the Ethanol Promotion and Information Council (EPIC). "A solution to our dependence on foreign oil rests right here at home through the hard work and ingenuity of the American workforce."

The study also found that 61 percent of those surveyed thought that ethanol production benefits the American economy. Another 58 percent of the 714 respondents felt that gasoline with ethanol additives is better for the environment, Nanfito said.

The study also found that informed consumers are the industry's most effective tool for the implementation of the fuel. When respondents were provided with relevant information on ethanol, their interest in purchasing it increased almost 20 percent.

"Consumers appear more than willing to throw their support behind a renewable fuel that reduces harmful emissions and provides tangible economic benefits to communities across the country," said Tom Slunicka, executive director for EPIC.

While consumers may want a push for ethanol-based fuels, the findings come in contradiction to those by a *Consumer Reports* study that was published in late October. The study concluded that while the E85 mix of 85 percent ethanol and 15 percent gasoline does produce cleaner emissions, automobiles using it will get poorer fuel economy, have to fill up more frequently and at a higher price.

A test of E85 fuel versus gasoline (blended with 10 percent ethanol) in a 2007 Chevrolet Tahoe found that the SUV got 21 miles per gallon on the highway with gasoline, but only 15 miles per gallon with E85. In city driving, the vehicle got 9 miles per gallon with gas and only 7 miles per gallon with E85. Acceleration was about the same with both fuels. E85, however, emitted only 1 part per million of nitrogen oxide into the atmosphere, while the gasoline vehicle emitted 9 parts per million of the pollutant.

The report's authors claim that despite the support of the Bush administration and major American car companies, "E85 is unlikely to fill more than a small percentage of U.S. energy needs." Although E85 emits fewer smog-causing pollutants than gasoline, it provides fewer miles per gallon, costs more and is difficult to find outside the Midwest, according to the article. And, ironically, government support for so-called flexible-fuel vehicles is indirectly causing more gasoline consumption than less, said *Consumer Reports*.

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