
FUELING THE FUTURE

Introduction

Americans in general are driving more miles, taking more trips, and consequently, spending more time in their cars. Drivers spent 45 more hours per year in their cars in 1999 than they did in 1994—an 11% increase in only five years.

Transportation is essential to our way of life. We use personal vehicles to get us to work, school, the market, and grandma's house. Businesses and local governments use fleets of vehicles to deliver goods and services. Transit companies use fleets of buses to help reduce the number of personal vehicles on the roads and to help nondrivers get where they want and need to be.

All motor vehicles require fuel; several billion gallons each year. Supporting our transportation needs, then, presents us with important questions: Where do we get the fuel? What are the impacts and costs of the fuel? How do we ensure that fuel supply meets demand now and in the future?

Over 55% of the petroleum used daily in the U.S. is imported, (25% of that from OPEC) contributing to a negative trade balance. In many areas air quality is below the federal standards set by the EPA for air pollution. Over 50% of that pollution is created by vehicle emissions. The transportation sector shares a portion of the responsibility for these problems.

Whose responsibility is it to regulate and promote transportation alternatives? Government, business/industry, and individuals all share a portion of it. Federal and state laws have been implemented to improve air standards. Many businesses have chosen clean-burning natural gas to fuel their fleets or delivery vans.

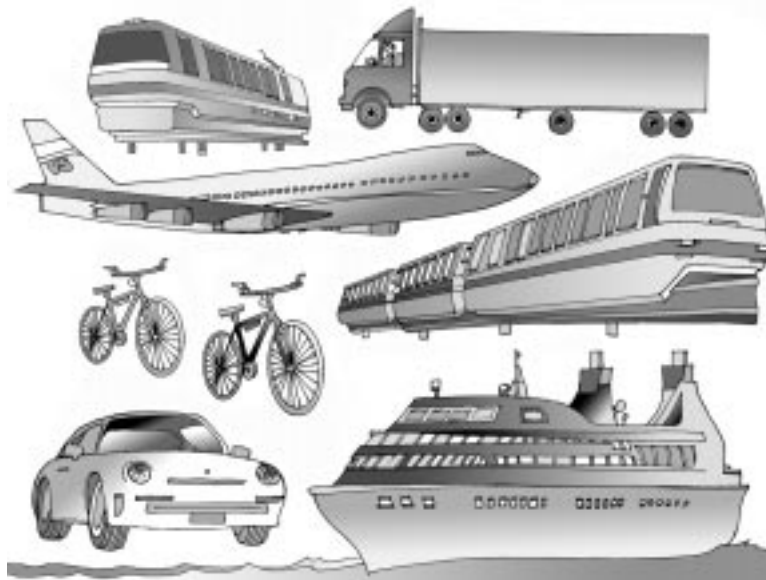
Government can engage in long range planning for the future, but in the end it will be individuals who make a commitment to alternative transportation choices that will make a difference. Citizens can support laws and

regulations that endorse cleaner air and a more secure nation. Then, they can help by purchasing alternative fuel vehicles and using alternative fuels.

National Security

There is heightened concern about our country's dependence on petroleum from unstable areas of the world. This has increased the development of new domestic fuels for vehicles and new vehicle technologies. Think about the following facts:

- In 2000, gas and diesel prices rose to the highest level ever, creating economic challenges for the U.S.
- Ninety-seven percent of transportation fuels used in the U.S. are petroleum based.
- Over half of the United States' daily oil supply comes from foreign countries. This percentage is expected to increase to 60–65% during the next decade.



- Countries in the Middle East have large supplies of oil, but acquiring it entails some political, economic, and environmental risks. Relying on countries that may be unstable creates security risks for the U.S.
- The price of oil in the U.S. is dependent upon OPEC, which has the power to make strategic decisions about increasing and decreasing oil supply.

America spends nearly \$60 billion each year to import approximately 55% of its oil. If Americans reduce the amount of imported oil by using domestically produced fuels and alternative fuels, several things will happen:

- the trade deficit will be reduced
- jobs will be created and economic activity promoted
- air quality will be improved
- domestically produced petroleum can be used for the by-products that are so important to our economic well-being and life-style

Alternative fuel vehicles significantly decrease pollutants in the atmosphere, conserve natural resources, help protect the environment and reduce foreign oil dependence.