

their present form are no where near being practical, and electric trucks are non-existent.

And the same is true for those who need to pull trailers, carry heavy loads, or run through rough terrain where four-wheel-drive is a must-in other words, anglers, boaters and hunters-to say nothing of the millions of larger families that have a very hard time fitting four kiddy car seats plus Mom and Dad into a compact sedan.

There's a cost issue; manufacturers estimate that getting to an average 54.5 mpg will add around \$3000 to the cost of each vehicle, and that will be passed on to the consumer. However, as Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood and others have pointed out, that cost would be more than counter-balanced over a five-year ownership period by fuel savings with gas at around \$4 a gallon, or even \$3 a gallon, given the typical 13,500-miles-per-year U.S. driver.

There's a built-in adjustment period to the new CAFE standards in 2021; if it appears then that too many companies are having issues building and selling the cars required by the steadily increasing standards-which will be about 41 mpg at that time--changes can be made then. It's not to be forgotten that the auto industry went on some economy kicks in the past, then had to retrench when the buying public would not buy the smaller cars required for higher mpg. But that sort of reluctance seems unlikely now with a far stronger environmental ethic in the U.S. and global warming concerns, as well as considerably higher gasoline prices.

While better fuel economy means savings for consumers, some opponents of new CAFE standards say the rules will add about \$3000 to the cost of an average vehicle.

There's a lot of good to increasing the fuel economy standards; reduced emissions and a cut in the U.S. contribution to whatever part of global warming is manmade certainly among them. Paying less for fuel won't make anybody unhappy, and neither will reducing reliance on the volatile and mostly anti-Western Middle East for a large portion of our oil.

But it's easy for a well-meaning but short-sighted government to regulate an industry out of business. If tow vehicles go, most of boating will go. And unfortunately, it's no secret that an increasing number of those with their fingers on the trigger of this stuff would be just fine with shutting down all internal combustion tomorrow, consequences and practicality be damned.

Usually overlooked in all this is that China, India and other developing nations have very minimal energy conservation rules or pollution limits. We live on a

planet, not on an island, and what comes out of the smokestacks in China affects the air breathed in L.A.

Global regulation simply is not happening on any meaningful scale in the foreseeable future-or at least not until a few million Chinese keel over someday from an environmental catastrophe. And we see lots of third world nations in a hurry to regulate the West, but few interested in regulating themselves.

It's not a black and white issue, to be sure. But boaters, anglers and outdoorsmen would do well to keep an eye on the new regulations and how they affect tow vehicle production in the next decade.

This 8 point buck was recently found entangled in fencing from an old wire gap. One end of the gap was still attached to the post so he was tethered with no way to free himself. I was also told of an incident where 2 large bucks were hopelessly tied together with the plastic wrap from a round bale. Some of these unfortunate incidents are unavoidable. However, some diligence on our part by recognizing and removing these hazards may help.



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