

# How to “Green” Your Car

California is the largest automobile market in the U.S., and the U.S. is the largest vehicle market in the world. In California, 40% of our greenhouse gas emissions are attributable to our cars.<sup>1</sup> Automobiles also contribute to other environmental and social problems such as smog, particulate pollution, dependence on foreign oil, and the human cost of oil wars.

<sup>1</sup> Union of Concerned Scientists statistic

## THE CULTURE CHANGE

Understand what “cool cars” really are. As you admire cars on the road - power cars like Ferraris and Porsches, or big vehicles like Hummers and Suburbans - understand how “uncool” they are. Their low mpg harms our environmental future. When your buddy at the office shows you his new vehicle, help create culture change. Save your gasp of admiration for the really Cool Cars: the ultra-efficient hybrids, and the new all-electric Tesla sports car.

## EXISTING VEHICLES

It’s not realistic for all of us to go get a better vehicle today. But there is plenty we can do with our existing vehicle. Make the most of what you’ve got ...

Tips for Improving Fuel Economy - from fueleconomy.gov

Keep Your Car in Shape

- Replacing a clogged air filter can significantly improve gas mileage.
- Keeping tires inflated to the recommended pressure and using the recommended grade of motor oil can improve fuel economy by up to 5%. The manufacturer’s recommended tire pressure can be found on the tire information placard and/or vehicle certification label located on the vehicle door edge, doorpost, glove-box door, or inside the trunk lid.

Plan and Combine Trips

- A warmed-up engine is more fuel efficient than a cold one. Many short trips taken from a cold start can use twice as much fuel as one multipurpose trip covering the same distance when the engine is warmed up and efficient. Note: Letting your car idle to warm-up doesn’t help your fuel economy, it actually uses more fuel and creates more pollution.

Drive More Efficiently

- Aggressive driving (speeding and rapid acceleration and braking) can lower your gas mileage by as much as 33% at highway speeds and 5% around town.
- Observe the speed limit - each 5 mph you drive over 60 mph can reduce your fuel economy by 10%
- Avoid idling - idling gets 0 miles per gallon!

The more, the merrier ... Organize carpools to get to work or to events. Fill the car with people so that less vehicles need to make the trip. Consider transportation sharing options like Flexcar

[www.flexcar.com/](http://www.flexcar.com/) and

Metro <http://mta.net>

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## **NEW VEHICLES**

Green your next vehicle purchase ... Particularly here in L.A., buying wiser is a huge step.

Buy Wiser ... Mpg = ghg

Poor mpg means a vehicle is bad for global warming. Better mpg means a vehicle is better on greenhouse gas emissions. Plan a wiser purchase by reviewing [www.greencars.com/bestof.html](http://www.greencars.com/bestof.html) and [fueleconomy.gov](http://fueleconomy.gov)

**Hybrids?** ... Understand that all hybrids aren't created equal. Some are "performance-boost hybrids" in which hybrid technology is being used to gain hyped performance, but mpg remains unremarkable. The cars which are better for our environmental problems are efficiency hybrids, the ones with those incredible mpg figures: 45, 55, 60 mpg and up.

## **RE-THINK TRANSPORTATION** ... Park it

Use human-powered transport whenever possible by walking, biking.

Read about the Car-Lite Lifestyle at <http://legacyla.net/transformation/?p=238>

**Do you really need to take this trip?** Try telecommuting from home. As future decisions arise about moving or changing jobs, weigh transportation among your considerations.

Read about ReLocalization at <http://legacyla.net/transformation/?p=232>

Adjust your Expectations ... Understand that our future will be quite different from the trajectory of our historic and economic past. It must be. To reduce greenhouse gas emissions 70-80% over the next few decades, and to create a graceful solution to Peak Oil (<http://www.nyswda.org/LegPosition/PeakOil.htm>), we must reThink and reDesign all of our fossil-fuel intensive habits. From our food supply to our transportation preferences, everything will change. Help your friends and family understand this too. Welcome the transformation!

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