Big 3, UAW, Congress Discuss EPA's CAFE Standards in Detroit

by Gerald Scott News Dept.

The EPA and NHTSA hosted the first of several planned to save about 4 billion barrels public meetings to discuss of oil, 2 million metric tons of the 2025 CAFE standards in Detroit last week and a large and eclectic turnout it was.

Representatives from the Big Three automakers, the UAW and even Congress testified at the Jan. 17 Detroit hearings.

The sessions were held in one of the ballrooms of Courtyard by Marriott Hotel across the street from the RenCen on Jefferson Ave.

Explained Margo Oge, director, Office of Transportation and Air Quality at EPA, "Today, EPA and NHTSA will hear testimony on a proposal to establish greenhouse gas emissions and fuel economy standards for light-duty vehicles for model years 2017 through 2025

"The proposed standards, ers issued last November . . . in which urged federal agencies

. . by using fuel economy improvements.

'This program is projected greenhouse gas emissions from the lifetime of those vehicles sold from 2017 to 2025.

She said that it is expected that new emissions technology on these vehicles will add between \$2,000 and \$3,200 to the cost per car, but there are those in Detroit who say it would be considerably higher.

Among the 90 or more testifiers were U.S. Rep. John Dingell, UAW President Bob King, and, from the Big Three, Mike Robinson (GM), Sue Cischke Wilton (Ford) and Jay (Chrysler). Everybody in the above group largely supported the EPA proposal with only minor qualifications.

One general dissenter was the National Automobile Deal-Association (NADA),

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ing consumer cost of new vehicles.

"To work, fuel economy rules must require improvements that are affordable," said New Mexico Ford dealer Don Chalmers, and chairman of NADA's Government Relations Committee.

"According to EPA and NHT-SA, the cumulative cost of all of their fuel economy rules will raise the average price of a vehicle by \$3,200. This is not pro-consumer."

Chalmers added. "While EPA and NHTSA can mandate what automakers must build, no one can dictate what customers will buy. If our customers do not purchase these products, we all lose.

"NADA supports fuel economy increases as long as they take consumer demand and vehicle choice into account."

With new auto sales rebounding from a low of 10.4 million in 2009 to 12.7 million last year, Chalmers cautioned

standards for the 2017-2025 model years could have real economic consequences if consumer demand is not fully taken into account.

"Dealers embrace the pivotal role we are playing to help lead our nation back to the road of prosperity, but we are wary of anything that might depress auto sales and turn back the gains being made." he said.

In the testimony, Chalmers pointed out that model year 2017-2025 fuel economy rules are not even due until April 1, 2015.

"Rushing to set costly new standards nearly three years early will unnecessarily and unhelpfully forgo the opportunity to learn how consumers react to the aggressive new standards now being put into place," Chalmers said.

Chalmers also questioned EPA's 2002-2010 medium- and

\$3,200 per vehicle price in- mandates, revealing that the crease as a result of the pro- EPA underestimated the averposed regulations.

Initial analysis from new research, conducted by NADA, indicates the federal government's estimate of \$3,200 may be substantially underestimated and the actual cost to consumers may be as high as \$5,000. Chalmers indicated that the study will be released in several weeks.

NADA will raise significant concerns over how the federal government calculated vehicle cost. Chalmers indicated from the initial analysis that the administration's fuel economy proposal grossly underestimates costs and actual retail prices may increase by as much as 60 percent.

In another study to be released in the coming months, NADA will look back at the

2025, equivalent of 54.5 mpg. to properly consider the ris- that proposed fuel economy the government's estimated heavy-duty truck emissions age actual compliance costs by a factor of three and that widely recognized market disruptions occurred as a result of fuel economy rules, or so NADA claims.

Note that the proposed rule requires annual fuel-economy increases of 5 percent for cars. Pickups and sport-utility vehicles can raise fuel economy at 3.5 percent for the first five years the rule will be in effect.

Then, unless regulators decide differently in a midterm review, trucks would also have to boost fuel economy 5 percent, per year.

Meanwhile, EPA and NHTSA are holding two more national public hearings on the ongoing proposal in Philadelphia (Jan. 19) and San Francisco (Jan. 24).

Backseat Fun for the Little Ones: Take Along Otto and Foofu

DETROIT - Got backseat boredom? DVD players and Game Boys are so five years ago, but a new concept in rear seat entertainment technology that uses the windows themselves could replace squirminess and snoozing with interactive scribbling, sweeping and pinching.

General Motors Research and Development put that challenge before researchers and students from the FU-TURE LAB at Bezalel Academy of Art and Design in Israel.

The task: Conceptualize new ways to help rear seat passengers, particularly children, have a richer experience on the road.

The Windows of Opportunity (WOO) Project was inspired by psychological studies indicating car passengers often feel disconnected from their environment. So GM asked the Bezalel students to turn car windows into interactive displays capable of stimulating awareness, nurturing curiosity and encouraging a stronger connection with the world outside the vehicle.

Traditionally, the use of interactive displays in cars has been limited to the driver and front passenger, but we see an opportunity to provide a technology interface designed specifically for rear seat passengers," said Tom Seder, GM R&D lab group manager for human-machine interface.

"Advanced windows that are capable of responding to vehicle speed and location hancements to provide entertainment and educational sages with other passengers GM Advanced Technical Cenvalue.



Spindow is a real-time peek into other users' window views. GM Research is experimenting with new options for car window displays to help alleviate backseat boredom.

free reign to the Bezalel students to create applications without concern whether they could be mass-produced. Bezalel is Israel's oldest institute of higher education and one of the more prestigious schools of its kind in the world.

The apps include:

• Otto, an animated character projected over passing scenery that responds to realtime car performance, weather and landscape. With Otto, passengers can learn about their environment in fun, playful ways.

• Foofu, an app that allows passengers to create, explore and discover through finger drawing on window steam.

 Spindow, an app that provides its users a peek into valuable, because working other users' windows around the globe in real time.

passengers to stream and could augment real world share music with other cars views with interactive en- on the road, download fa-

seat and side window.

The students used motion and optical sensor technology developed by EyeClick to turn standard window glass into a multi-touch and gesture sensitive surface.

If such interactive windows were put into automotive production, they likely would use electronically charged "smart glass" technology, which is capable of variable states of translucence and transparency, and can reflect projected images.

Smart glass is increasingly used in architectural and display applications, but outside of movies like "Mission Impossible: Ghost Protocol" is rarely seen in cars.

"Projects like WOO are inwith designers and scholars from outside of the automo-• Pond, an app that allows tive industry brings fresh perspective to vehicle technology development," said Omer Tsimhoni, lab group manager for numan-machine interface, ter in Israel. "WOO is just one of many



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Since GM has no immediate

vorite tracks, and share meson the road.

To demonstrate these apps, plans to put interactive dis- the academy's students pro- projects underway at GM that play windows into production duced a full-scale functional could reinvent the passenger vehicles, the R&D team gave prototype of a rear passenger experience in years to come.

