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Subject

2005-0173 95 / 395 HOV Problems

First the environment is important to me and my family. This legislation seems a little one sided though. Your attempt to clean up the environment is backfiring, I strongly believe.

Evidence:

You objective seems to be to increase the market share of purchased / used Hybrids, in order to help clean up our environment. But, this is at the expense of time, money and the environment of those of us in car pools. Has there been any studies showing that since hybrids have been allowed on HOV (I95 . 395) the volume of cars has increased, resulting in slower speeds for non-hybrid drivers, as well as hybrid drivers. My fuel efficiency has dropped dramatically due to this increased volume of vehicles on the HOV lanes in VA.

The only persons benefiting, therefore from this legislation, is the auto industry and fuel industry. The idea of creating legislation (HOV) and replacing it with loop wholes, seems very short-sighted. Don't hybrid owners already get a tax break for purchasing the hybrid. Why must they impede my daily commute to such a financial and environmental way. If you factor into my extra idel time on the highway, this far outweighs the financial or economic benefit by providing the privilege of non-HOV hybrid from violating the previous law in use the HOV lanes. I've seen studies indicating 200% increase in usage of express lanes in the Northern Virginia area by hybrids over the past two years. My commute has doubled in that same amount of time. Is this not evidence of a correlation? Please reconsider this legislation. The environment is very important. But, there has to be a better way to solve this problem than putting loop wholes into bills before congress.

Example:

Commuting during rush hour on the HOV lanes reduces my mileage on a tank of gas by 65-90 miles. Driving on the HOV at rush hour I get between 290-325 miles on a tank of gas. Traveling at normal speeds HOV or regular non-rush hour travel I get between 350-400 miles on a tank of gas. This is significant loss due tot the increased cost of fuel, my time and of course the environment.

I recall that before mandatory airbags the car industry "sucked" the consumers dry with adding this option onto our cars. Why too can't the auto industry be forced to comply with higher fuel efferent vehicles if they wish to stay in the US market. I'm sure Toyota and Honda will not object. All the recent promotional literature from Ford also indicates their interest in saving the environment.

Look, also, at the world-wide cruise industry. They are committed to

saving the environment without any legislation being imposed upon them. Common decency dictated their moves in the past decade to purify the earth by not damaging it through recycling programs. Those that violate the laws of the country they are cruising into pay the fines. I see a direct correlation between the cruise industry and the auto industry. Both cater to the whims and desires and the consumer who buy their products. Why would it not seem logical that the auto industry can step up to the plate much quicker and make all cars more fuel efficient.

Solution:

Inventory the entrance to HOV at Horner Rd in Prince William County. For every 4-5 carpool vehicles entering that highway you will see one hybrid. If you remove 1/5 of the cars off the lanes the speed will get back to the posted 65mph. This will increase fuel efficiency for all carpools. Instead of making exemptions in legislations why don't we improve the systemic problem of the auto industry making gas guzzling vehicles and blaming on the consumer for demanding it. I recall the adage "build it and they will come".

PLEASE RESCIND THIS ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION. It is bad for the consumer (HOV carpool users) and the environment.

Sincerely,  
Mark Buchko,  
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