

**STATEMENT OF SENATOR JOHN McCAIN
RANKING REPUBLICAN, SENATE COMMITTEE ON
COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION
JOINT COMMITTEE HEARING WITH ENERGY AND
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE ON
THE EFFECT OF ENERGY POLICY ON CONSUMERS
AUGUST 2, 2001**

- I thank the Chairman for convening this afternoon's hearing to discuss Corporate Average Fuel Economy standards. The issue of fuel economy standards is one of extreme importance for the future generations of this country, and I thank the National Academy of Sciences panel for their diligent work in preparing their report. The wealth of information provided by the NAS report will be very helpful in the Commerce Committee's consideration of this issue.
- The debate over CAFE is complex because it affects the environment, public safety, and the economy. It creates tension between the consumers' choices to drive inefficient vehicles and the environmental consequences that result from those choices.
- The NAS committee concluded, nevertheless, that the benefits that have resulted from CAFE-type programs clearly warrant government intervention in the market.
- CAFE standards, as NAS reports, have produced many positive results, including, a reduction in the emission of greenhouse gases, a decreased dependence on foreign oil, and lower fuel consumption. At the same time, however, NAS reports that CAFE standards have probably resulted in increased traffic fatalities due to the downsizing and downweighting of vehicles by manufacturers in their efforts to comply with the standards. As the Commerce Committee further examines this issue, it is imperative that we account for any unintended consequences of our actions. As the NAS committee suggests, it is possible to achieve better fuel economy without having to compromise passenger safety.
- I look forward to further Commerce Committee hearings on this issue, Mr. Chairman, and I thank the panel again for their commitment to this issue and their service to the Committee.

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