Fuel Economy:

A California State-Representative Multi-Mode Survey of Drivers

2022 Results

Overview of Methodology

Consumer Reports fielded this Fuel Economy Survey to understand Americans' priorities and beliefs around fuel economy. These results are based on interviews conducted September 23 – October 17, 2022.

The survey was administered by NORC at the University of Chicago through its AmeriSpeak® Panel to a nationally representative sample. Interviews were conducted in English and in Spanish, and were administered both online and by phone. In addition, NORC oversampled drivers from California State. In total, NORC collected 567 interviews for this California State population sample. Of these, 546 were collected by web mode and 21 by phone mode, 533 in English and 34 in Spanish. Final data are weighted by age, gender, race/Hispanic ethnicity, housing tenure, telephone status, education, and Census Division to be proportionally representative of the California State adult population.

Key demographic characteristics (after weighting is applied) of this sample are presented below:

51% female; median age of 45 years old; 38% white, non-Hispanic; 38% 4-year college graduates; and 65% have a household income of $50,000 or more.

The margin of error for results based on the total sample is +/-5.36 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. Smaller subgroups will have larger error margins, and only those subgroups for which there are at least 100 unweighted cases are included.

TOPLINE RESULTS

The questions presented below were shown to respondents in this order unless otherwise noted. Where appropriate, question verbiage, response answer choices, or direction of scales were alphabetized, randomized, or rotated. Those instances are noted below.

Prepared by CR Survey Research Department, December 2022

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FE1.

Does your household currently own or lease one or more vehicles?

	Total
	%
Yes	94
No	6
Base: All respondents (CA drivers)	566

FE2. *[RESPONDENTS WERE PROMPTED TWICE TO ANSWER IF THEY DID NOT INITIALLY RESPOND. RESPONSE OPTIONS DISPLAYED IN THIS ORDER: CAR/SEDAN; SUV WITH THREE ROWS OF SEATS; SUV WITH TWO ROWS OF SEATS; PICKUP TRUCK; VAN OR MINIVAN; SPORTS CAR; OTHER; DO NOT DRIVE.]*

How would you describe the vehicle that you drive most often?

	Total
	%
Car/sedan	53
SUV with two rows of seats	23
Pickup truck	9
SUV with three rows of seats	9
Van or minivan	3
Sports car	2
Other, please specify	1
I do not drive	screened out
Base: All respondents (CA drivers)	567

FE3. *[SHOW IF ANSWER TO FE2 WAS NOT 'I DO NOT DRIVE' OR MISSING.]*

Did you buy or lease the vehicle you drive most often new or used?

	Total
	%
New	44
Used	50
Unsure; I am not the one who bought or leased it	6
Base: All respondents (CA drivers)	564

FE4. *[SHOW IF ANSWER TO FE2 WAS NOT 'I DO NOT DRIVE' OR MISSING. RESPONSES DISPLAYED IN A DROP-DOWN MENU.]*

What is the model year of the vehicle you drive most often?

	Total
	%
2023	1
2022	6
2021	5
2020	5
2019	9
2018	8
2017	5
2016	8
2015	7
2014	6
2013	5
2012	4
2011	4
2010	2
2009	2
2008	5
2007	3
2006	3
2005	1
2004	2
2003	3
2002	0
2001	2
2000	0
Earlier than 2000	4
Base: All respondents (CA drivers)	562

FE5. *[SHOW IF ANSWER TO FE2 WAS NOT 'I DO NOT DRIVE' OR MISSING. RESPONDENTS WERE PROMPTED ONCE TO ANSWER IF THEY DID NOT INITIALLY RESPOND. RESPONSE OPTIONS WERE SHOWN IN THIS ORDER: GASOLINE; DIESEL; HYBRID; PLUG-IN HYBRID; ELECTRIC; OTHER.]*

What is the engine type of the vehicle you drive most often?

	Total
	%
Gasoline	87
NET: Either kind of hybrid or electric	***12***
NET: Either kind of hybrid	***9***
Hybrid--runs mainly on gasoline, but also uses a battery and electric motor to help power the vehicle. Cannot be plugged in to charge	8
Fully electric, like a Tesla or a Nissan Leaf--does not take gasoline or any fuel other than electricity	3
Plug-in hybrid--hybrid that can be plugged in to charge the battery directly. Can drive a limited distance on electric	1
Diesel	1
Other, please specify	-
Base: All respondents (CA drivers)	566

FE6. *[SHOW IF ANSWER TO FE5 WAS EITHER KIND OF 'HYBRID' OR 'ELECTRIC.' QUESTION STEM READS EITHER 'HYBRID' OR 'ELECTRIC' DEPENDING ON RESPONSE TO FE5. RESPONSES WERE WRITTEN INTO A TEXTBOX.]*

Please provide the make and model of your vehicle. *[If the vehicle was hybrid or plug-in hybrid, question* ***read "…of your hybrid vehicle." If the vehicle was electric, question read "…of your electric vehicle."]***

For instance, Toyota Prius, Ford F-150 Lightning, or Hyundai Elantra.

FE7. *[SHOW IF ANSWER TO FE2 WAS NOT 'I DO NOT DRIVE' OR MISSING. RANDOMIZE RESPONSE OPTIONS. LIMITED TO THREE SELECTIONS.]*

Thinking about the vehicle you drive most often, which three attributes have the most room for improvement?

Select up to three responses.

	Total
	%
Fuel Economy	53
Maintenance costs	28
Purchase price	27
Infotainment or connectivity (e.g., Bluetooth, GPS navigation, Wi-Fi)	21
Vehicle comfort	16
Passenger room	15
Cargo space	14
Off-road capability	13
Reliability	13
Horsepower	12
Vehicle size	10
Style	9
Safety	9
Handling	6
Base: All respondents (CA drivers)	567

FE8. *[SHOW IF ANSWER TO FE2 WAS NOT 'I DO NOT DRIVE' OR MISSING. ROTATE RESPONSE SCALE.]*

How important is fuel economy to you when considering what vehicle to purchase or lease?

	Total
	%
Not at all important	2
Not very important	3
Somewhat important	21
Very important	38
Extremely important	37
Base: All respondents (CA drivers)	554

FE9. *[SHOW IF ANSWER TO FE8 WAS NOT 'NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT' OR MISSING. RANDOMIZE RESPONSE OPTIONS, HOLDING 'OTHER' AND 'NOTHING IN PARTICULAR' AT END IN THAT ORDER.* ***LIMITED TO TWO SELECTIONS.]***

You said that fuel economy is at least a little important to you when considering what vehicle to purchase or lease. Which two, if any, of the following are reasons you think it is important?

Select up to two responses.

	Total
	%
Decrease spending on fuel or gasoline	59
Protection against future gas price increases	38
Lower carbon pollution	24
Improve air quality	23
Concern about US dependence on oil from foreign countries	11
Concern about dependence on non-renewable fuels	10
Higher resale value	9
Other	1
Nothing in particular	6
Base: Respondents who said fuel economy is "not very important" through "extremely important" when considering what vehicle to get	546

FE10. *[ROTATE ORDER OF 'AGREE' AND 'DISAGREE IN QUESTION STEM AND ROTATE RESPONSE OPTIONS TO MATCH. RANDOMIZE ITEMS ACROSS TWO SCREENS.]*

Please indicate if you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	Total
Automakers should continue to improve fuel economy for all vehicle types.	
	%
NET "Agree"	***86***
NET "Disagree"	***4***
Strongly Agree	50
Agree	37
Neither agree nor disagree	10
Disagree	2
Strongly Disagree	2
Base: All respondents (CA drivers)	562

FE10. *[CONTINUED.]*

Making larger vehicles such as SUVs or trucks more fuel-efficient is important.	
	%
NET "Agree"	***83***
NET "Disagree"	***4***
Strongly Agree	42
Agree	42
Neither agree nor disagree	12
Disagree	2
Strongly Disagree	2
Base: All respondents (CA drivers)	561
I expect each new generation of vehicles available on the market to be more fuel-efficient than the last.	**Total**
	%
NET "Agree"	***83***
NET "Disagree"	***4***
Strongly Agree	44
Agree	39
Neither agree nor disagree	13
Disagree	4
Strongly Disagree	-
Base: All respondents (CA drivers)	558
Automakers have a responsibility to consumers to improve gas mileage.	
	%
NET "Agree"	***80***
NET "Disagree"	***5***
Strongly Agree	37
Agree	43
Neither agree nor disagree	15
Disagree	5
Strongly Disagree	1
Base: All respondents (CA drivers)	560
The U.S. government should continue to increase fuel-efficiency standards.	**Total**
	%
NET "Agree"	***71***
NET "Disagree"	***10***
Strongly Agree	34
Agree	37
Neither agree nor disagree	19
Disagree	7
Strongly Disagree	3
Base: All respondents (CA drivers)	555

FE10. *[CONTINUED.]*

Automakers are doing a good job of making fuel-efficient passenger vehicles.	
	%
NET "Agree"	***51***
NET "Disagree"	***16***
Strongly Agree	7
Agree	44
Neither agree nor disagree	32
Disagree	12
Strongly Disagree	5
Base: All respondents (CA drivers)	558
The federal government should prevent states from setting stronger vehicle emissions standards than the federal government.	**Total**
	%
NET "Agree"	***32***
NET "Disagree"	***41***
Strongly Agree	13
Agree	19
Neither agree nor disagree	27
Disagree	20
Strongly Disagree	20
Base: All respondents (CA drivers)	557
Automakers care about lowering fuel costs for their customers.	
	%
NET "Agree"	***29***
NET "Disagree"	***32***
Strongly Agree	9
Agree	21
Neither agree nor disagree	39
Disagree	24
Strongly Disagree	8
Base: All respondents (CA drivers)	558

[FE11 AND FE12 APPEARED IN A RANDOM ORDER.]

FE11.

Some people are interested in fuel-efficient vehicles even if the initial price for the vehicle is a little higher because it saves them money on gas, and thus larger savings over time. How quickly would fuel savings have to offset a higher purchase price for you to be willing to pay extra for a more fuel-efficient vehicle?

	Total
	%
NET: In less than one year	***48***
NET: In less than six months	***28***
Within the first month	10
One month to less than three months	9
Three months to less than six months	9
Six months to less than one year	20
One year to less than two years	16
Two years to less than three years	8
Three years to less than five years	5
Over the lifetime of the vehicle	11
I would be willing to pay extra for a more fuel-efficient vehicle regardless of whether I would make the money back	12
Base: All respondents (CA drivers)	559

FE12.

Sometimes more fuel-efficient vehicles have a higher sticker price than less fuel-efficient vehicles. This means higher monthly payments. However, vehicles that are more fuel efficient do not need to be fueled as often, leading to lower monthly gas expenses.

If you had the choice to buy or lease a vehicle at a higher monthly payment, but would save enough at the pump that your total monthly expense would be lower, would you buy that vehicle?

	Total
	%
Yes	76
No	24
Base: All respondents (CA drivers)	559

FE13. *[SHOW IF FE5 WAS 'GASOLINE,' 'DIESEL,' OR EITHER 'HYBRID.']*

On average, what is the MPG (miles per gallon) that you get with the vehicle you drive most often?

If you're uncertain, please make your best estimate.

	Total
	%
NET: Less than 25	***37***
NET: 25 to less than 35	***34***
NET: 35 or more	***19***
Less than 20	15
20 to 24	22
25 to 29	18
30 to 34	15
35 to 39	8
40 to 44	4
45 to 49	1
50 to 54	4
55 to 59	1
60+	2
Unsure	11
Base: All respondents (CA drivers)	547

FE14. *[RANDOMIZE ITEMS ACROSS THREE SCREENS.]*

Please indicate, to the best of your knowledge, whether the following statements about hybrid vehicles are true or false.

A hybrid vehicle is a vehicle that runs on a combination of electricity and gasoline.

	Total
	%
Hybrid vehicles are typically more fuel-efficient than conventional non-hybrid gasoline vehicles of the same class.	
NET: Any "True"	***88***
NET: Any "False"	***9***
True	48
Mostly true	40
Mostly false	8
False	1
Skipped or said "don't know"	3
Base: All respondents (CA drivers)	567

FE14. *[CONTINUED.]*

Hybrid vehicles typically cost <u>more</u> to repair than conventional non-hybrid gasoline vehicles.	
NET: Any "True"	***73***
NET: Any "False"	***24***
True	26
Mostly true	47
Mostly false	22
False	3
Skipped or said "don't know"	2
Base: All respondents (CA drivers)	567
Most hybrid vehicles will pay for any additional purchase cost in fuel savings within a few years of ownership.	**Total**
NET: Any "True"	***72***
NET: Any "False"	***26***
True	21
Mostly true	51
Mostly false	22
False	3
Skipped or said "don't know"	3
Base: All respondents (CA drivers)	567
Hybrid vehicles typically have <u>similar</u> power/performance to that of non-hybrid gasoline vehicles of the same class.	
NET: Any "True"	***70***
NET: Any "False"	***27***
True	21
Mostly true	48
Mostly false	21
False	6
Skipped or said "don't know"	3
Base: All respondents (CA drivers)	567
Hybrid vehicles typically require <u>more</u> maintenance than conventional non-hybrid gasoline vehicles.	**Total**
NET: Any "True"	***46***
NET: Any "False"	***50***
True	13
Mostly true	33
Mostly false	41
False	8
Skipped or said "don't know"	4
Base: All respondents (CA drivers)	567

FE14. *[CONTINUED.]*

Hybrid vehicles are <u>less</u> reliable (e.g., break down more) than conventional non-hybrid gasoline vehicles.	
NET: Any "True"	***30***
NET: Any "False"	***67***
True	8
Mostly true	22
Mostly false	48
False	19
Skipped or said "don't know"	3
Base: All respondents (CA drivers)	567

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