

# MPG Stickers Campaign

Accelerating the Adoption of Fuel Efficient Vehicles in  
the US



## Activist Guide

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Acterra

[www.mpgsticker.org](http://www.mpgsticker.org)

## **Campaign Background**

The MPG campaign is a grass roots campaign aiming to change individual behavior and accelerate the shift to fuel efficient vehicles. With an average of 24 MPG for new passenger cars and light trucks, the US lags far behind Japan (47 MPG), Europe (44 MPG), China (36 MPG) and most other countries in the world. The Federal Energy Act of 2007 mandates 35 MPG by... 2020! This is a step forward but it falls far short of the leadership you would expect from the US on this issue.

### **Developing an MPG-based value system**

The campaign encourages drivers of fuel efficient cars, which for the purpose of the campaign we define as getting 30 miles per gallon or higher, to display an MPG sticker on their bumper to make a statement and encourage other drivers to follow suit. By getting many drivers to display the stickers, we aim to develop an MPG-based value system, encouraging in turn other drivers to consider fuel-efficiency as a key selection criterion the next time they replace their car.

You save more gasoline and carbon by changing from a 23 to a 30 MPG vehicle, than from a 30 to a 40 MPG one. Of course, 40+ MPG cars are even better and should be encouraged, but it is more important and cost effective for energy independence and climate protection to focus on the most inefficient cars. 30 MPG cars are not just smaller cars, they also include many options from midsize cars and SUVs. They are usually lighter and therefore more responsive than heavier models, and at current gas prices they save a lot of money!

### **This is not a technology issue, it's an individual adoption one**

Cars and light trucks generate over 1 billion tons of greenhouse gases every year in the U.S. alone, or 18% of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions according to the US Environment Protection Agency (EPA). This is a huge opportunity to make a difference to climate change. The technology is already available today: the MPG Stickers web site lists over 30 models available in the US which already get over 30 MPG average per the EPA standard. The real challenge is individual adoption: we have to make it more socially desirable to drive a gas sipper than a gas guzzler!

### **A social change campaign**

With record high gas prices, and increasing concern about climate change and environmental issues, we believe that American consumers are ready to adopt more fuel efficient vehicles. The MPG Stickers campaign is a way to help and accelerate that shift. It is a social change campaign, counting on US drivers who increasingly feel the need to make a statement, to harness collective consumer power and send a clear message to both Congress and the industry to accelerate the transition to much higher vehicle fuel efficiency.

## Campaign Strategy

The campaign strategy is based on getting people to take a simple and low-cost action, displaying an MPG sticker on their car, which when done by a high enough number of drivers, will have large scale effect on Americans car purchasing behavior.

Once stuck on cars, stickers will work by themselves, day in day out: they will be seen by many people when the car is driven around, and even when parked!

The campaign is not asking people to spend a lot of money to buy a new car, or change their behavior dramatically and ride their bike to work. Although those changes are laudable and should be encouraged, MPG Stickers is only asking people to buy a sticker and stick on their car.

### The threshold effect

We don't need to sell millions of stickers to start having an impact: having enough stickers out there on the road so that people will see them most time they drive will at some point create a snowball effect:

- 1) More people will buy stickers
- 2) More people will consider MPG as a key decision factor when buying their next vehicle 😊

This threshold is local, not national: reaching it in a city or community can cause the campaign to “snowball” in that local area. This is quite achievable by individuals or small teams of activists.

The key is to get the word out and get enough people to visit [www.mpgstickers.org](http://www.mpgstickers.org) and buy a sticker. The campaign relies on two strategies to spread the word:

- Online/Internet grassroots activism
- Community grassroots activism

The following section describes how you can help the campaign in a very concrete manner.



## Online Activist

The internet is a great way to spread the word and get more people to visit [www.mpgstickers.org](http://www.mpgstickers.org):

- **Blogs:** do you write your own blog? Post a topic on MPG Stickers, link to the site and encourage people to visit it
- **Social networks** (MySpace, Facebook...): join our group on MySpace, create your own group in other networks
- **Video:** let your imagination roam free and shoot a video about MPG Stickers! Post it on YouTube or other video sharing sites.
- **Email signature:** add [www.mpgstickers.org](http://www.mpgstickers.org) to your email signature
- And probably many other ways, we welcome your suggestions so that we can add them to this guide for the benefit of others.

## Community Activist

Traditional community activism also works wonders with MPG Stickers: as discussed above, local thresholds can create snowball effects in your community or city. One of the most effective ways of spreading the word in your local community is to distribute flyers: Our MPG Stickers web site has 2 flyers available for download. You can print copies (for example using Fedex Kinko's or any other print/photocopy shop). Black and white copies typically cost less than 10c a copy commercially. Please remember to print flyers on 100% recycled paper!

Flyer distribution strategies:

- **Mailboxes in your neighborhood:** Target houses with fuel efficient vehicles (30+ MPG, see list on [www.mpgstickers.org](http://www.mpgstickers.org)) in the drive way, not only those are the vehicles that would qualify for a sticker, but their owners are also more likely to buy one.
- **Farmers market:** Table at your local farmers market, there are many environmentally minded people who will be interested
- **Local green events**
- **Mass transit stations:** Transit users are more likely to be environmentally conscious than the average person.

These are just a few suggestions, let us know how they work; tell us your other ideas for spreading the word; join us on MySpace to discuss this with fellow activists and supporters!

Good luck and thank you for being a MPG Sticker Activist!