



## PRESS RELEASE

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**Contact:** Russell Long, 415-544-0790, ext. 18  
Elisa Lynch, 415-544-0790, ext. 15

### **Focus on Fuel Economy Memorial Day Weekend**

**Environmentalists Urge Motorists to Track Fuel Economy, and Ask EPA to Correct Inaccurate Labels on New Cars**

**San Francisco, CA** –As nearly 31 million motorists hit the roads over the Memorial Day weekend, environmentalists are asking them to do a little homework while they're out there. Bluewater Network, a national environmental group based in San Francisco, is urging Americans to keep track of their fuel economy and compare it to the value advertised on the car's window sticker.

"Motorists may be surprised by how much lower their fuel economy is than what the EPA fuel economy label says it should be," said Russell Long, Executive Director of Bluewater Network. A study by Bluewater Network estimates that real-world fuel economy is as much as 34 percent lower than the government's figures suggest. They've petitioned the EPA to correct the outdated tests on which the label values are based, and EPA responded by opening up the issue for public comment.

With record-high fuel prices, this weekend's travel will hit consumers' pocketbooks more than ever. According to Bluewater Network, consumers could be paying as much as \$300 more for gas each year than they expected when they bought their vehicle. "If you're concerned about gas prices, global warming, or America's over-dependence on oil, it's time to share your disappointment with the EPA," said Elisa Lynch, Global Warming Campaign Director of Bluewater Network. "We've made the comment process easy, by allowing consumers to write to EPA directly through our website: [www.bluewaternetnetwork.org](http://www.bluewaternetnetwork.org)."

The fuel economy values on new vehicle window labels and in EPA's annual *Fuel Economy Guide* are dismally low, but the actual fuel economy that America's passenger vehicles are achieving on the road is even worse. This is due to the fact that reported figures are based on test procedures and calculation methods that were designed more than two decades ago, when conditions on America's roads were far different than they are today. Significant changes in traffic and driving patterns that have occurred in the interim have rendered these procedures and methods obsolete and inaccurate.

High gasoline prices, national security concerns about increasing US dependence on foreign oil, and mounting evidence that global warming is a reality have led the public to take a renewed interest in the fuel economy of passenger cars and trucks. Our ever-growing fleet of passenger vehicles is guzzling gas and spewing out emissions that contribute to global warming at an increasingly frenzied rate, while the average fuel economy of new vehicles has plummeted to its lowest point in twenty years. The EPA is accepting comments on whether they should update fuel economy testing until July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2004.

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*Bluewater Network is a national environmental organization dedicated to reducing dependence on fossil fuels & eradicating other root causes of air and water pollution, global warming, & habitat destruction. More than 20,000 members in all 50 states and four nations have already joined.*

Bluewater Network ~ 311 California, Suite 510 ~ San Francisco, CA 94104  
[www.bluewaternetnetwork.org](http://www.bluewaternetnetwork.org) ~ [bluewater@bluewaternetnetwork.org](mailto:bluewater@bluewaternetnetwork.org)  
T: 415.544-0790, F: 415.544.0796