



News Release

For Immediate Release

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Contact: Allyson Wilson (202) 249-6623

Email: allyson_wilson@americanchemistry.com

PLASTICS HOLD KEY TO HELPING CARS MEET MILEAGE AND EMISSIONS GOALS UNDER NEW FUEL EFFICIENCY STANDARDS

WASHINGTON, DC (August 30, 2012) – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) this week issued jointly a federal rule aimed at increasing the national Corporate Average Fuel Economy, or CAFE, standards for vehicles in the United States. The new standards will affect cars and light trucks introduced in model years 2017-2025.

In response to the new rule, America's plastics makers are emphasizing readiness to help automakers and original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) meet the new standards with a range of lightweight and versatile materials.

"Many plastics, including plastics composites, have a history of helping to make cars lighter and more agile while enhancing safety and performance," said Steve Russell, ACC's vice president of plastics.

"Experts estimate that plastics make up 50 percent of today's vehicles by volume – but only 10 percent of the weight. Since less energy is required to power a lighter vehicle, lightweight and versatile plastics can make an important contribution in helping automakers meet the new fuel efficiency standards," Russell said.

Specifically, lightweight plastics help to reduce the load on a vehicle's engine which increases miles per gallon while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

In addition to making vehicles lighter and more fuel efficient, plastics materials have enabled some of the most significant vehicle safety innovations of the past decades, such as advanced seatbelts and air bags, as well as structural enhancements, such as bumpers, door panels and front fenders that also can play a role in improving passenger safety.

The amount of plastics and composites used in vehicles increased 25 percent between MY1995 and 2007 and continues to climb. The source of these improvements – innovations in plastics – still holds untapped potential to further enhance vehicle safety, efficiency, performance and design.

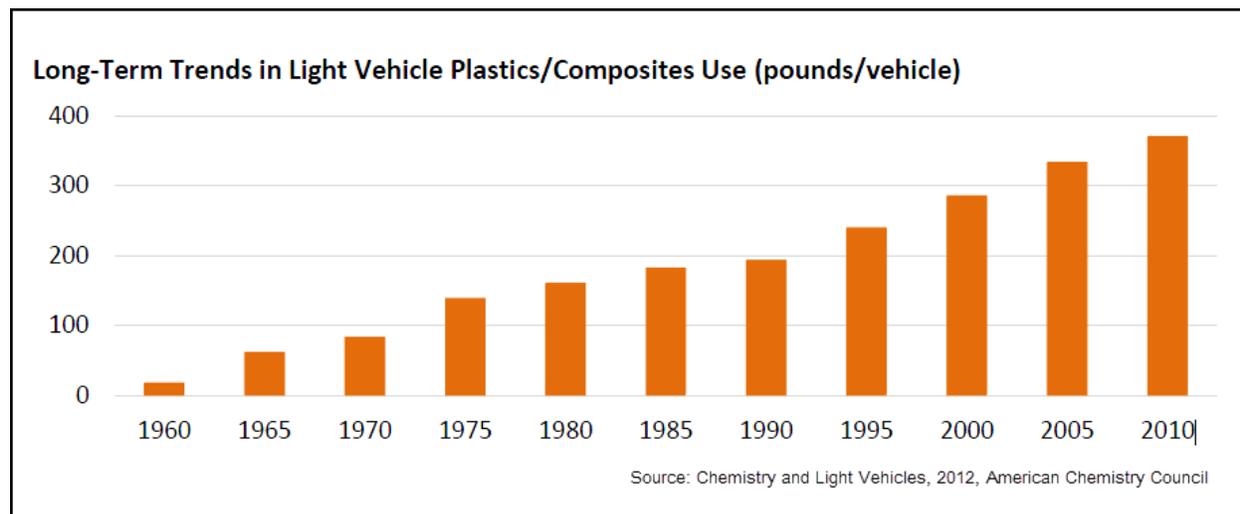
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Caption: Each pound of plastics and plastics composites in a vehicle typically replaces 2-3 pounds of other, heavier materials. As a result, plastics help to reduce vehicle weight, thus improving fuel efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. (Source: [Chemistry and Light Vehicles](#), American Chemistry Council, p. 5-10.)

Plastics makers continue support federal agencies' efforts to document the safety of mass reduction in vehicles and to develop predictive engineering tools to assist OEM designers and engineers in incorporating innovative plastics into new vehicles.

For more about plastics innovations in vehicles, visit <http://www.plastics-car.com/>.

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About the Plastics Division

The American Chemistry Council's Plastics Division represents leading companies dedicated to providing innovative solutions to the challenges of today and tomorrow through plastics. Ongoing innovations from America's plastics makers have led to medical advances and safety equipment that make our lives better, healthier and safer every day. And, advances in plastics are helping Americans save energy, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and decrease waste. Because plastics are such a valuable resource, the Plastics Division is leading efforts to "reduce, reuse, recycle and recover," including through outreach, education and access to advances in recycling technology:

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The American Chemistry Council (ACC) represents the leading companies engaged in the business of chemistry. ACC members apply the science of chemistry to make innovative products and services that make people's lives better, healthier and safer. ACC is committed to improved environmental, health and safety performance through Responsible Care[®], common sense advocacy designed to address major public policy issues, and health and environmental research and product testing. The business of chemistry is a \$760 billion enterprise and a key element of the nation's economy. It is the largest exporting sector in the U.S., accounting for 12 percent of U.S. exports. Chemistry companies are among the largest investors in research and development. Safety and security have always been primary concerns of ACC members, and they have intensified their efforts, working closely with government agencies to improve security and to defend against any threat to the nation's critical infrastructure.

