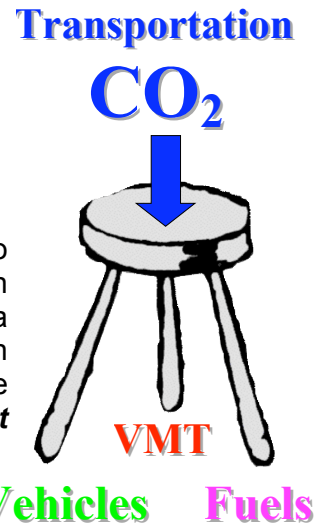


Can a Two-Legged Stool Stand?

The Need to Address Driving Rates in Climate Legislation

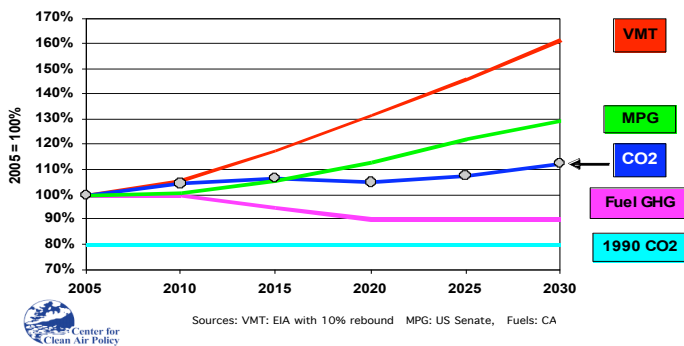
The transportation sector is the second largest and fastest-growing contributor to U.S. greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, in large part due to steadily rising trends in the number of miles that cars and trucks travel each year. While there has been a federal focus on increasing fuel economy of vehicles and decreasing carbon content in fuels, these strategies alone will not be enough to slow and reverse overall GHG emissions from the transportation sector. **The number of miles that vehicles travel is the critical, but often forgotten, 'third leg' of the transportation stool.**



More Efficient Vehicles and Cleaner Fuels Are Not Enough

Greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector rose 25% from 1990 to 2005. Under current growth projections for driving rates (as measured in **Vehicle Miles Traveled or VMT**), even if fuel efficiency standards were increased to 35 mpg and fuel carbon content were reduced by 10%, transportation sector emissions in 2030 would still rise to nearly 40% above 1990 levels. This trend would greatly frustrate goals to reduce global GHG emissions by 50 to 80% by 2050, as recommended by the International Panel on Climate Change.

Cap & Trade Will Have Little Impact on Vehicle-Miles-Traveled



- Regulating transportation fuels at the refinery level, as proposed in the current Lieberman-Warner bill, would not affect driving rates, according to experts. Strategies to curb VMT growth are a cost-effective way to both reduce emissions and ease the burden on other economic sectors.

Americans Have Few or No Alternatives to Driving

- Vehicle miles traveled (VMT) has increased three times faster than the U.S. population over the last 15 years. VMT is projected to increase another 59% between 2005 and 2030.
- Less than 5% of Americans live within one-half mile of fixed guideway transit options, yet of those that do, 33% regularly use transit and 44% regularly travel by walking, bicycle, or transit.
- The cost of driving is likely to increase dramatically under proposed cap and trade legislation, leaving millions of Americans without affordable alternatives.

Proven 'Technology' to Reduce VMT Already Exists

- Unlike many vehicle and fuel technologies, the "technology" to create compact, walkable communities and enhance public transportation exists today.
- Research has shown that compact development patterns reduce carbon emissions from automobiles by up to 10 percent, compared to typical sprawl-type developments.

Public transportation in the U.S. already saves an estimated 6.9 MMT of carbon each year.

'Cap-and-trade is not a sufficient policy for the transportation sector. Intelligent land use and infrastructure policies that enhance the attractiveness of walking, biking, and public transport can also make an important and potentially critical difference by 2050.'

– Dr. David Greene, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, in testimony before the Senate EPW Committee November 2007

Americans Want More Transit Options and Walkable Communities

- A recent National Association of Realtors poll shows that a strong majority of Americans (about 70%) are concerned about how growth and development affect global warming.
- More than 90% believe that building communities where people can walk more and drive less is a key solution to reducing GHG emissions.

Smart Growth Strategies to Reduce VMT Have Many Other Public Benefits

- Reduce transportation costs: families in areas with good transit and walkable neighborhoods pay less than 10% of their income for transportation, while families living in areas with fewer alternative transportation options pay upwards of 25%.
- Reduce the cost of infrastructure for roads, water, and sewer lines.
- Protect farmland and open space, improve water quality, and improve public health by providing more opportunities for physical activity.
- Save oil and reduce our dependence on non-renewable sources of energy.

VMT Reduction and the Looming Transportation Funding Crisis

- The Federal Highway Trust Fund is projected to be insolvent in FY 2009. The Fund relies on the gas tax, creating a disincentive for states to reduce VMT.
- Federal climate and transportation bills need to work together to reduce VMT and greenhouse gas emissions, akin to the way that ISTEA was developed to implement the Clean Air Act .

VMT Reduction Strategies for Federal Climate Change Legislation

- *Direct a portion of generated funds to smart growth and alternative transportation strategies* Funds could be used to support public transportation, encourage infill development, create development near transit centers, and other strategies proven to reduce driving and CO2 rates.
- *Create incentives for states and localities to reduce VMT rates:* Funds could also be used as a reward for states and localities that successfully employ VMT reduction strategies.
- *Require regional transportation plans to pass a conformity test for CO2 emissions:* EPA could exercise their authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions by setting regional caps and requiring transportation plans to conform to those caps.
- *Create incentives for housing and employment in 'climate-friendly' locations:* encouraging people to live and businesses to locate in transit accessible and walkable neighborhoods.
- *Improve the quality of VMT data:* A federal initiative to promote high-quality VMT data collection would help to quantify the climate benefits of VMT reduction strategies.

Climate Protection, Smart Growth, and Economic Development

Portland, Oregon, with a reputation as a livable, healthy, and prosperous city, **saved the equivalent of \$2.6 billion annually in gasoline and time** because of measures they implemented to reduce the need for residents to drive. according to a CEO for Cities report. **Per capita VMT in Portland is 20% lower than the national average for other large metro areas.**

The link between increasing VMT and economic growth is a myth, according to research by the Brookings Institution. Many older industrial cities identified as struggling economically, losing population and jobs, have had higher-than-average growth in VMT per capita rates.