

MEDIA RELEASE

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Converting Vehicles to Run on Natural Gas Just Got Easier

WASHINGTON, DC, March 31, 2011 – The federal government just made it easier to convert cars and trucks to run on natural gas, helping Americans reduce their reliance on foreign sources of oil and paving the way for cleaner air.

NGVAmerica, the trade association that represents the natural gas vehicle industry, today applauded the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) decision to streamline the requirements for certifying aftermarket systems that are used to convert vehicles to run on alternative fuels such as natural gas. The agency's action modifies regulations that have been in force for aftermarket conversions since April 2002 and that were adopted pursuant to the federal Clean Air Act.

“At a time when oil prices are once again steeply rising and businesses and consumers are looking for real solutions to ease their pain at the pump, this action by EPA could not be more welcome,” said Richard Kolodziej, president of the trade group.

The new regulations will make it less burdensome and less expensive for companies that offer vehicle conversion systems for many existing cars and trucks, according to Kolodziej. “This should have the effect of making conversions more affordable and getting more conversion systems for more vehicle models into the marketplace.”

“EPA's decision is particularly important in the case of heavy-duty fleets, since currently, because of cost, there are no EPA approved conversion systems for diesel vehicles,” says Kolodziej. “Because heavy-duty fleet vehicles are the biggest consumers of fuel, they have the greatest potential for by reducing the country's dependence on foreign oil in the near term.”

Under the Clean Air Act, all new motor vehicles must meet stringent emission requirements, regardless of the fuel they use. Newly manufactured natural gas vehicles have been subject to EPA regulations since 1996. However, converted vehicles initially were exempt from the regulatory requirements but have been subject to the rigorous and expensive certification rules since 2002. Manufacturers encouraged the EPA to take steps to reduce the burden imposed by the regulations and to include additional flexibility for aftermarket systems.

The revised regulations establish three new tiers: relatively new vehicles; vehicles more than two model years old; and vehicles beyond their useful life, the definition of which varies depending on the size and weight of the vehicles. The revised regulations codify existing flexibility for conversions intended for use on vehicles produced within the past two model years and extend more flexibility to vehicles that are more than two model years old.

The new rules will continue to require that manufacturers demonstrate that their conversion systems maintain emissions performance of the vehicle. In most cases, natural gas will produce less emission because of its clean-burning properties.

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NGVAmerica is a national organization dedicated to the development of a growing, sustainable and profitable market for vehicles powered by natural gas or biomethane. NGVAmerica represents more than 100 companies interested in the promotion and use of natural gas and biomethane as transportation fuels, including: engine, vehicle and equipment manufacturers; fleet operators and service providers; natural gas companies; and environmental groups and government organizations. For more information about NGVAmerica, visit our website at www.ngvamerica.org