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I appreciate being allowed to present testimony here today. I would like to open my testimony by commenting that last Friday night as I drove home with my wife from the theater, I pointed to a gauge on the dashboard of my car which shows the average miles per gallon I am getting on the current tank of gas. It read a very satisfying 48.9 miles per gallon. I would ask each of you:

- Do you know what mileage you personally are getting on your own vehicle?

If you do, I'd ask:

- Are you satisfied with that knowledge? Is that a good thing?

If you don't, I would then ask you:

- Why not?
- Do you think as a responsible consumer of one of the most important products in our contemporary society you ought not to know how fast you are personally burning it up?

I would like to follow up that question with another:

- How did you feel when you paid the bill for your last tank of gas?
- What do you think you can do about that? Complain to your legislator about how the oil companies are gouging the consumer? Or just stop buying so much of their product?

The point of these rather aggressive questions is that we all have choices. You have choices. I have choices. But the corporate sector of our country has only

one objective: make as much profit today as they can, given their limited perspective. American corporations seem so focused on the current bottom line that they cannot even look to their own long term profitability. And they certainly don't voluntarily do anything that increases current costs, no matter what it does for society at large... which they ultimately depend on. The corporate sector is again trying to limit or delay access to wise consumer choices.

Here's an example: In 1959 I was stationed in France in the Army. I bought myself a 1954 Citroen sedan, one of those long low black jobs so popular as Paris taxis. Its front wheels were wider set than the rear wheels and it had front wheel drive. I remember driving it through a rare snow fall along the curving banks of the Loire river, feeling as though the car were on tracks. It drove fabulously. I came back to the States a year or so later and had to buy myself a new car. I went to the American dealership and asked about front-wheel drive. Guess what their answer was? Can't be done! Actually at that very time Oldsmobile had a high-end model on the road that had front-wheel drive, and within a couple of decades, America had gotten the idea and now it's the norm.

Here's another example: my first new car was a 1964 VW camper, a German car that was the forerunner of our minivans. America caught the wave again about 20 years late.

- I bought my first Dodge caravan in 1989, a stick-shift vehicle with the smallest engine available. I got between 27 and 29 miles per gallon.
- I kept it for 5 years, then bought a 1994, again stick-shift with the smallest engine available. This one got 25-27 miles per gallon.
- I kept it for 10 years, and then got a 2004, smallest engine available but couldn't get a stick shift this time. Now the mileage was down to 18 to 22 miles per gallon, a loss in average fuel efficiency of almost 30% over 15 years from the same basic model of vehicle. America increased its dependence on imported fuel by something like 50% over this same period of time.

I was so disgusted with this that I dumped the Dodge after less than two years and bought a Toyota Prius hybrid for about the same price as the Caravan, counting the tax breaks and Pennsylvania rebate. Now my gas mileage has jumped by about 250% and my fill-up cost is in the \$15 region. Yes, we have choices.

The point of this catalog of choices is to emphasize that America's car manufacturers are almost always dragging their feet to their own detriment and to the detriment of the consumer. Everything about that hybrid vehicle I am driving is good for me, good for my neighbor and good for the nation... everything except the fact that no American company builds its equal so the profit and the jobs from it go overseas.

This vehicle burns fuel more cleanly and burns less of it than almost any other car on the road. I predict that common sense will ultimately triumph. I believe that in ten years or so the highway will be filled with hybrids and it will be hard to get rid of a standard internal combustion vehicle. But until that happens, we need the Pennsylvania Clean Vehicles program to protect our people from the noxious impact of the inefficient vehicles that pollute our air, sicken our people, sap our fuel reserves and make us dependent on unstable sources of gasoline. It is totally logical that we should support our people in making wise choices. Delaying those choices or in any way weakening the program is destructive for the people. That's what the Clean Vehicles program is about.

