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Washington - Dozens of members are extending their support for legislation Congressmen Baron Hill (D-Ind.) and Lee Terry (R-Neb.) recently introduced to increase Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards. The bill, H.R. 2927, has gained significant bipartisan support - garnering more than 50 cosponsors.

"I am very proud of this fuel economy standards legislation Congressman Terry and I have introduced," Hill said. "It presents a thoughtful and effective alternative to proposals already out there by my colleagues that would, more than likely, result in the loss of thousands of jobs in this country."

Congressman Terry said: "America needs a sound, comprehensive energy policy that includes measures to achieve greater energy efficiency. With rising oil prices and growing frustration with our dependence on foreign oil, reducing the amount of gasoline we use in our vehicles makes sense."

H.R. 2927 requires the U.S. Secretary of Transportation to prescribe fuel economy standards at the maximum feasible level for each car model year. In addition, the bill also requires the Secretary to mandate separate standards for Model Year 2022 such that car standards and pickup trucks standards will be no less than a combined 32 miles per gallon (mpg) and no more than a combined 35 mpg. H.R. 2927 keeps in place the current separation of standards for regular cars and light trucks, which include sports utility vehicles. Alternative CAFE legislation largely calls for all automobiles to be grouped into one category.

"This bill presents a real and difficult challenge to the automobile industry: start making your cars, trucks and sport utility vehicles more fuel efficient and friendlier to the environment," Hill said. "Although challenging, this bill is realistic. We must collectively move our country on a path toward energy independence. But, in doing so, we must not jeopardize tens of thousands of American jobs."

"In rural areas, especially on the farm, trucks with hauling and tow capacity are essential," Terry said. "New mandates on fuel efficiency by Congress will be effective only if they are technologically and economically feasible, give manufacturers enough time to re-orient their production processes, and maintain different treatment of cars and trucks - which our bill does."

H.R. 2927 also establishes a public education program to inform consumers how best to conserve fuel when using their vehicles and how consistently replacing car tires can have a real impact on the fuel economy of vehicles.

"This bill is real, bipartisan progress at work," Hill said. "Congressman Terry and I take the issue of energy independence very seriously - it is an issue that greatly affects our economic and national security."

"Our legislation provides a sensible plan for vehicle manufacturers to increase mileage in their cars and trucks while ensuring that the marketplace, not the government, will let consumers choose what kind of vehicles they want to drive," Terry said.

H.R. 2927 currently has 51 cosponsors and is pending before the U.S. House Energy and Commerce Committee.

