

2012 BECC Conference: Poster Presenter Abstracts

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Driving Impact within Federal Vehicle Fueling Behavior

Federal regulations require drivers of federal flex fuel vehicles (FFVs) to fuel with E85 whenever available. Data collected by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) suggests that most drivers do not choose E85, even when it is available. In FY 2011, drivers of federal FFVs, leased through the General Services Administration, only fueled with E85 23% of the time when available – falling well short of the mandate. Given that federal fleet vehicle drivers do not use their own money to pay for fuel, this behavior is difficult to explain on purely economic grounds. Identifying the motivation behind this behavior is critical to understanding how to encourage and increase alternative fuel use in the federal fleet and beyond. NREL is leading a three-year research project to identify the extent to which non-cost-based behavioral factors are influencing fuel-purchasing behavior, and which interventions are most effective at increasing E85 purchases. This session focuses on lessons learned from the first year of the project, during which NREL:

- Identified test and control groups via a survey of federal fleet drivers combined with statistical analysis of E85 availability and fuel purchasing transactions during FY 2009-2011.
- Designed interventions targeted at specific behaviors based on analysis of survey responses.
- Developed mechanisms to monitor fuel purchasing and generate timely feedback.

This research will aid in the design and implementation of programs that effectively induce behaviors that increase deployment of alternative fuels and reduce petroleum consumption.