

1 Personal Vehicles Evaluated against Climate Change Mitigation 2 Targets

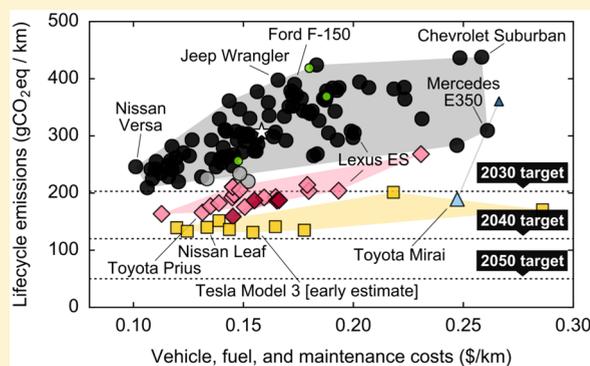
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7 **S** Supporting Information

8 **ABSTRACT:** Meeting global climate change mitigation goals will
9 likely require that transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions
10 begin to decline within the next two decades and then continue to
11 fall. A variety of vehicle technologies and fuels are commercially
12 available to consumers today that can reduce the emissions of the
13 transportation sector. Yet what are the best options, and do any
14 suffice to meet climate policy targets? Here, we examine the costs
15 and carbon intensities of 125 light-duty vehicle models on the U.S.
16 market today and evaluate these models against U.S. emission-
17 reduction targets for 2030, 2040, and 2050 that are compatible with
18 the goal of limiting mean global temperature rise to 2 °C above
19 preindustrial levels. Our results show that consumers are not
20 required to pay more for a low-carbon-emitting vehicle. Across the
21 diverse set of vehicle models and powertrain technologies examined,
22 a clean vehicle is usually a low-cost vehicle. Although the average carbon intensity of vehicles sold in 2014 exceeds the climate
23 target for 2030 by more than 50%, we find that most hybrid and battery electric vehicles available today meet this target. By 2050,
24 only electric vehicles supplied with almost completely carbon-free electric power will meet climate-policy targets.



25 ■ INTRODUCTION

26 The transportation sector accounts for 28% of U.S. greenhouse
27 gas (GHG) emissions through vehicle fuel combustion, and
28 13% worldwide.^{1,2} Light-duty vehicles (LDVs), which are
29 defined by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as
30 passenger cars and light trucks with 12 seats or fewer and a
31 gross vehicle weight rating below 8500 lbs (10 000 lbs for SUVs
32 and passenger vans),³ contribute about 61% of emissions from
33 the U.S. transportation sector.² LDVs are therefore a crucial
34 element of any comprehensive strategy to reduce U.S. and
35 global GHG emissions, particularly under growing trans-
36 portation demands.^{1,4–6}

37 Alternative powertrain technologies, such as battery electric
38 and fuel-cell powertrains, are potential mitigation technologies
39 for personal LDVs, and a variety of studies have evaluated their
40 capacity to contribute to the reduction of transportation
41 emissions.^{7–25} Most of these studies focus on the comparison
42 of powertrain technologies implemented in a car of a single size
43 and body style.^{7–9,11–15,17–20,23,25} Among those studies that
44 consider different vehicle sizes and styles,^{10,16,21,24} none
45 considers more than three different options. In aggregate,
46 these studies cover a limited set of available vehicles, and direct
47 comparisons across studies are complicated by differences in
48 assumed system boundaries, fuel-production pathways, and
49 lifetime driving distance, as well as data sources for lifecycle
50 inventories and fuel-consumption values.

Here, we address two missing elements in the literature by 51
reflecting the diversity of personal vehicle models available to 52
consumers and by assessing these options against climate 53
change mitigation targets. When comparing personal vehicles 54
against climate targets, it is important to understand the wide 55
range of models available for purchase because consumer 56
choices are defined by this available set. 57

In particular, we focus on the trade-offs between costs and 58
emissions that consumers face in selecting a vehicle model. 59
Although cost is not the sole influence on consumer purchasing 60
decisions,^{26–31} low-carbon vehicles will only achieve a 61
dominant market share if they are affordable to a majority of 62
the driving population. (Our proxy for affordability is the 63
relative cost of low-carbon vehicles versus popular, conven- 64
tional vehicles on the market.) Here, we address these issues by 65
examining a comprehensive set of 125 vehicle models on sale 66
today, covering all prominent powertrain technology options: 67
internal-combustion-engine vehicles (ICEVs); hybrid electric 68
vehicles (HEVs); plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs); and 69
battery electric vehicles (BEVs). Our analysis also includes the 70

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71 2016 Toyota Mirai, one of the first commercially available fuel-
72 cell vehicles (FCVs).

73 We evaluate vehicle models on a cost-carbon plot³² to
74 answer the overarching questions: How do the costs and
75 carbon intensities of vehicle models compare across the full
76 diversity of today's LDV market, and what is the potential for
77 various LDV technologies to close the gap between the current
78 fleet and future GHG emission targets? Specifically, we ask: Do
79 consumers face a cost-carbon trade-off today? Which models, if
80 any, meet 2030 GHG emissions reduction targets? Finally, in
81 the longer term, which vehicle technologies would enable
82 emissions targets for 2040 and 2050, designed around a 2 °C
83 limit, to be met? What role can advancements in the carbon
84 intensity of electricity generation, powertrain efficiencies, and
85 production pathways for liquid fuels play? The insights and
86 choices identified in this study may be of interest to car owners,
87 cars manufacturers, and transportation policymakers alike.

88 This paper is organized as follows. In the next section, we
89 describe the methods used for our analysis. We then present a
90 comparison of vehicle models spanning today's LDV market
91 against carbon intensity targets on a cost-carbon curve before
92 investigating what factors may enable the future decarbon-
93 ization of this sector. Finally, we discuss the significance of our
94 results for key decision-makers.

95 ■ MATERIALS AND METHODS

96 Key steps in our analysis include: (1) estimating LDV lifecycle
97 GHG emission targets (gCO₂eq/km) for the years 2030, 2040,
98 and 2050 consistent with 2 °C climate policy targets; (2)
99 identifying 125 of the most popular LDV models on the market
100 today across all powertrain technologies; (3) estimating the
101 lifecycle costs and carbon intensities of these vehicles on the
102 basis of today's costs and energy mixes and comparing these
103 results against the GHG targets; and (4) assessing the potential
104 of different vehicle models and powertrain technologies to meet
105 GHG targets under a number of vehicle-improvement and
106 energy-market scenarios. Further details are given in the
107 [Supporting Information](#).

108 **Estimating Carbon Intensity Targets.** On the basis of
109 overall GHG reduction targets, we estimate carbon intensity
110 targets for emissions from personal LDVs, quantified as GHG
111 emissions per unit distance traveled (gCO₂eq/km). The targets
112 are calculated in three steps: (1) define the overall annual U.S.
113 GHG emission targets in 2030, 2040, and 2050; (2) allocate a
114 fraction of these emissions to LDVs; and (3) divide these
115 numbers by the total vehicle distance expected to be traveled by
116 LDVs.

117 In step 1, the U.S. emissions reduction targets correspond to
118 a proposed equitable allocation of GHG emissions across
119 nations to limit global warming to less than 2 °C above
120 preindustrial temperatures.³³ Under these targets, total U.S.
121 GHG emissions would be reduced by 32% below 1990 levels by
122 2030 and 80% below 1990 levels by 2050. We also calculate an
123 emission target for 2040 using linear interpolation (56% below
124 1990 levels). The U.S. had outlined an equivalent emission
125 reduction goal of 42% below 2005 levels (corresponding to
126 32% below 1990 levels) by 2030 prior to the United Nations
127 Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen. More recently,
128 the U.S. has made less stringent commitments to reduce overall
129 GHG emissions 26–28% below 2005 levels by 2025 as part of
130 the 2014 U.S.–China Joint Announcement on Climate
131 Change.³⁴

In step 2, we apply equal-percentage GHG emissions 132
reductions across all end-use sectors. (This is in contrast to 133
the approach applied in step 1, of a differentiated allocation 134
across nations, and is an approach suggested by current policy 135
proposals in the U.S. targeting electricity and transportation 136
end-use sectors. Below, we briefly discuss circumstances under 137
which different percentage emissions reductions might be 138
applied across end-use sectors.) We define the share of 139
emissions represented by the LDV end-use sector to include 140
emissions from (a) fuel combustion; (b) the production, 141
distribution, and storage of the fuel; and (c) the production, 142
shipping, and disposal of the vehicles. Using the Greenhouse 143
Gases, Regulated Emissions, and Energy Use in Transportation 144
(GREET) model,³⁵ discussed further in the [Estimating Vehicle](#) 145
[GHG Emissions](#) section, we estimate that, on average, (a) 146
represents 70.8% of lifecycle emissions while (b) and (c) 147
represent 18.5% and 10.7%, respectively. Including lifecycle 148
emissions numbers based on these estimates raises the share of 149
overall U.S. GHG emissions represented by LDVs from 17% to 150
24%. (The transportation sector's 28% share of overall GHG 151
emissions cited in this paper's introduction includes only 152
emissions from fuel combustion in vehicles).² The 24% 153
estimate does not account for the fact that a portion of the 154
vehicle and fuel production emissions may have occurred 155
outside the U.S. 156

In step 3, we use forecasts of the total vehicle miles traveled 157
(VMT) by personal vehicles from the Annual Energy Outlook.⁵ 158
In 2011, the VMT by LDV were 2623 billion miles (4220 159
billion km) and are projected to grow by 0.9% per year until 160
2040.⁵ The emissions intensity targets (emissions per km) 161
estimated here assume a continuation of this growth rate until 162
2050. The effect of varying this assumption is shown in [Figures](#) 163
[S1–S2](#). 164

The resulting targets are 203 gCO₂eq/km for the average 165
vehicle on the road in 2030, 121 gCO₂eq/km in 2040, and 50 166
gCO₂eq/km in 2050. Emission targets are shown as dotted 167
lines in [Figures 1–5](#). The targets are raised relative to a case in 168
which only vehicle fuel combustion emissions are included or 169
to a case in which only raw test-cycle fuel-economy data is 170
considered, for two reasons: (1) we include well-to-tank 171
emissions of fuel production and distribution, as well as 172
emissions from the production and disposal of the vehicles; and 173
(2) we base fuel-consumption estimates on U.S. EPA ratings, 174
which have been adjusted for the use of auxiliaries, driving in 175
cold and hot conditions, aggressive driving patterns, and 176
charging losses of PHEVs and BEVs.³ 177

Emissions intensity targets are subject to various uncertain- 178
ties in future demand for LDV travel (or VMT) and the 179
allocation of emissions reductions across sectors (for a 180
quantitative description of the effect of uncertainty, see ref 181
[37](#)). The latter is a policy decision and economic efficiency 182
arguments could be used to justify different percentage 183
emissions reductions across sectors. A potential shortcoming 184
of “segmental” policies is that they determine this allocation at 185
the outset rather than letting the market do so.³⁷ Segmental 186
policies do have advantages, however, and they are the current 187
policy format of choice in the U.S. 188

Uncertainties in VMT will emerge from the decisions of 189
individuals in the population, and are more difficult to estimate 190
ex ante. A stagnation of VMT has been observed since 2006, 191
meaning that these targets may be somewhat too stringent 192
(although VMT rose again in 2015).³⁶ However, an increase in 193
travel by some modes of transportation for which decarbon- 194

195 ization is particularly difficult (such as air travel) may call for
196 the increased decarbonization of others (such as LDVs),
197 offsetting the relaxation of targets due to any long-term
198 reduction in the growth of VMT.

199 These two sources of uncertainty and the effect that they can
200 have on the GHG intensity targets are further discussed in the
201 Supporting Information, with the effect of the uncertainty in
202 future VMT estimated in Figures S1–S2. Our findings
203 regarding which powertrain technologies can meet midcentury
204 climate targets are robust to these VMT uncertainties, due to
205 the dominant effect of aggressive emissions-reduction targets.

206 **Selecting Vehicle Models.** We report the lifecycle carbon
207 intensities and costs to the consumer of a total of 125 LDVs.
208 We define LDVs as all four-wheeled vehicles that are captured
209 by the EPA regulations on LDV vehicle fuel economy. This
210 includes all passenger cars and light trucks with 12 seats or less
211 and a gross vehicle weight rating below 8500 lbs (10 000 lbs for
212 SUVs and passenger vans).³ We include all internal-
213 combustion-engine vehicle (ICEV) models that sold more
214 than 50 000 units in 2014 (93 models³⁸), all non-plug-in hybrid
215 electric vehicles (HEVs) that sold more than 5000 units in
216 2014 (16 models³⁹), and all plug-in hybrid electric vehicles
217 (PHEVs) and battery electric vehicles (BEVs) that sold more
218 than 1000 units in 2014 (four and eight models³⁹). Combined,
219 these vehicles account for 83% of all personal LDVs sold in
220 2014.³⁸ In addition, we include the recently released Toyota
221 Mirai as the only fuel-cell vehicle (FCV), and added diesel and
222 E85 flex-fuel versions for three of the ICEV models. The Mirai
223 is shown for two different hydrogen production pathways:
224 steam methane reforming of natural gas (SMR) and electrolysis
225 using electricity. We also include early estimates of the costs
226 and carbon intensities of the Tesla Model 3 and the Chevrolet
227 Bolt. Except for the Mirai, Model 3, and Bolt, all data used to
228 calculate emissions and costs are based on the respective 2014
229 models.

230 **Estimating Vehicle GHG Emissions.** Lifecycle GHG
231 emission intensities are calculated using GREET 1 and 2.³⁵
232 GREET is a widely used, publicly available full-vehicle-lifecycle
233 model developed by Argonne National Laboratory.³⁵ GREET 1
234 models the lifecycle emissions of fuels and of electricity, and
235 GREET 2 models the lifecycle emissions of the vehicles
236 themselves. For each powertrain technology and model, the
237 vehicle class (car, SUV, or pickup), curb weight, fuel
238 consumption, battery power (for HEVs), battery capacity (for
239 PHEVs and BEVs), and fuel-cell power (for FCVs) are
240 determined. These parameters are obtained from manufac-
241 turers' web sites and a car-information web portal.⁴⁰ The
242 carbon intensity of electricity is modeled as the average U.S.
243 mix, including emissions from infrastructure construction (623
244 gCO₂eq/kWh). We use a consistent lifetime of 169 400 miles
245 (272 600 km) for all vehicle types, corresponding to the
246 approximate averages for LDVs in the U.S.⁴¹ Other GREET
247 parameters are left at their defaults. Because consistent
248 information could not be obtained for all models, the use of
249 light-weighting materials is not considered; that is, all vehicles
250 are assumed to have the "baseline" material mix of their
251 respective powertrain technology and vehicle class.

252 We determine the fuel consumption of each car from the
253 official fuel economy value recorded by the U.S. government
254 (EPA), based on a standardized test procedure specified by
255 federal law, using the combined city (55%) and highway (45%)
256 rating.³ These fuel-economy ratings are adjusted for the use of

air conditioning in warm weather, efficiency losses in cold
weather, and driving patterns.³

257
258
259 Although there is public skepticism about the accuracy of
260 these ratings,⁴² the EPA holds that they are relatively accurate
261 on average⁴³ and updates test procedures regularly to mitigate
262 biases. Tests found that large cars and diesel cars may yield
263 somewhat higher (better) real-world fuel economies on average
264 than their ratings suggest,⁴² and certain hybrid models may
265 result in lower fuel economies.⁴⁴ Notably, however, these
266 results could be partially explained by biases in driving behavior
267 rather than unrealistic test ratings: hybrids may more often be
268 driven in urban environments with dense traffic (which can
269 detrimentally impact fuel economy), while large trucks may
270 more often be driven under steady, efficient highway
271 conditions.

272 For those models for which several trims and engine sizes are
273 available, the basic (most affordable) trim is analyzed. An
274 exception is made for models that are offered with more than
275 one powertrain technology. In these cases, the trims and feature
276 sets of all technology options for that model are matched by
277 upgrading trims to the lowest common feature set, allowing
278 like-for-like comparison of these models. Details can be found
279 in Table S5 in the Supporting Information. Although tires are
280 included in the vehicle cycle (three sets per lifetime for cars,
281 four for SUVs and pickups), the GHG emissions of
282 maintenance are not modeled, and it is assumed that all
283 components (including the battery) last for a vehicle's entire
284 lifetime. The results' sensitivity to this assumption is provided
285 in Figure S3. Further sensitivity analyses, details on how GHG
286 emissions were calculated, and the specific parameters obtained
287 for each of the 125 analyzed vehicle models can be found in
288 sections S2 and S3 in the Supporting Information.

289 **Estimating Vehicle Costs.** The costs of ownership are
290 calculated as the present value of the costs of purchasing the
291 vehicle, paying for fuel and electricity, tire replacements, and
292 regular maintenance, and are presented in 2014 U.S. dollars. As
293 with the calculation of GHG emissions, we assume that each
294 vehicle is driven a total distance of 169 400 miles at 12 100
295 miles (19 470 km) per year for 14 years of ownership. A
296 discount rate of 8% is applied to future cash flows. The average
297 reported lifetime is slightly longer (15 years), and the average
298 annual driving distance is slightly lower (11 300 miles per year)
299 but decreases with increasing car age.⁴¹ Using a lifetime of 14
300 years at a constant 12 100 miles per year yields the same
301 discounted cash flows and the same total lifetime distance
302 driven as would using the reported lifetime and vehicle-age-
303 specific annual driving distances. Insurance costs, as well as
304 taxes on vehicle acquisition and ownership, are not included.
305 They depend strongly on the location of the customer and on
306 additional complicating factors that are specific to each vehicle
307 model. Each vehicle's price is based on its official
308 manufacturer's suggested retail price (MSRP) without tax. In
309 addition, we evaluate the impact of federal tax refunds on the
310 lifecycle costs of PHEVs, BEVs, and FCVs. The federal refund
311 scales with the capacity of the battery up to a maximum value of
312 \$7500.⁴⁵ Finally, we inspect the added effect of a best-case state
313 tax refund. Assessed for the case of California, this contributes
314 \$1500 for PHEVs, \$2500 for BEVs, and \$5000 for FCVs.⁴⁶
315 Some other states have similar programs, but they were not
316 analyzed in detail.

317 Fuel and electricity prices are based on the 10 year average of
318 2004–2013 inflation-adjusted prices in the U.S.⁴⁷ The resulting
319 prices are \$3.14/gal for gasoline, \$3.41/gal for premium 319

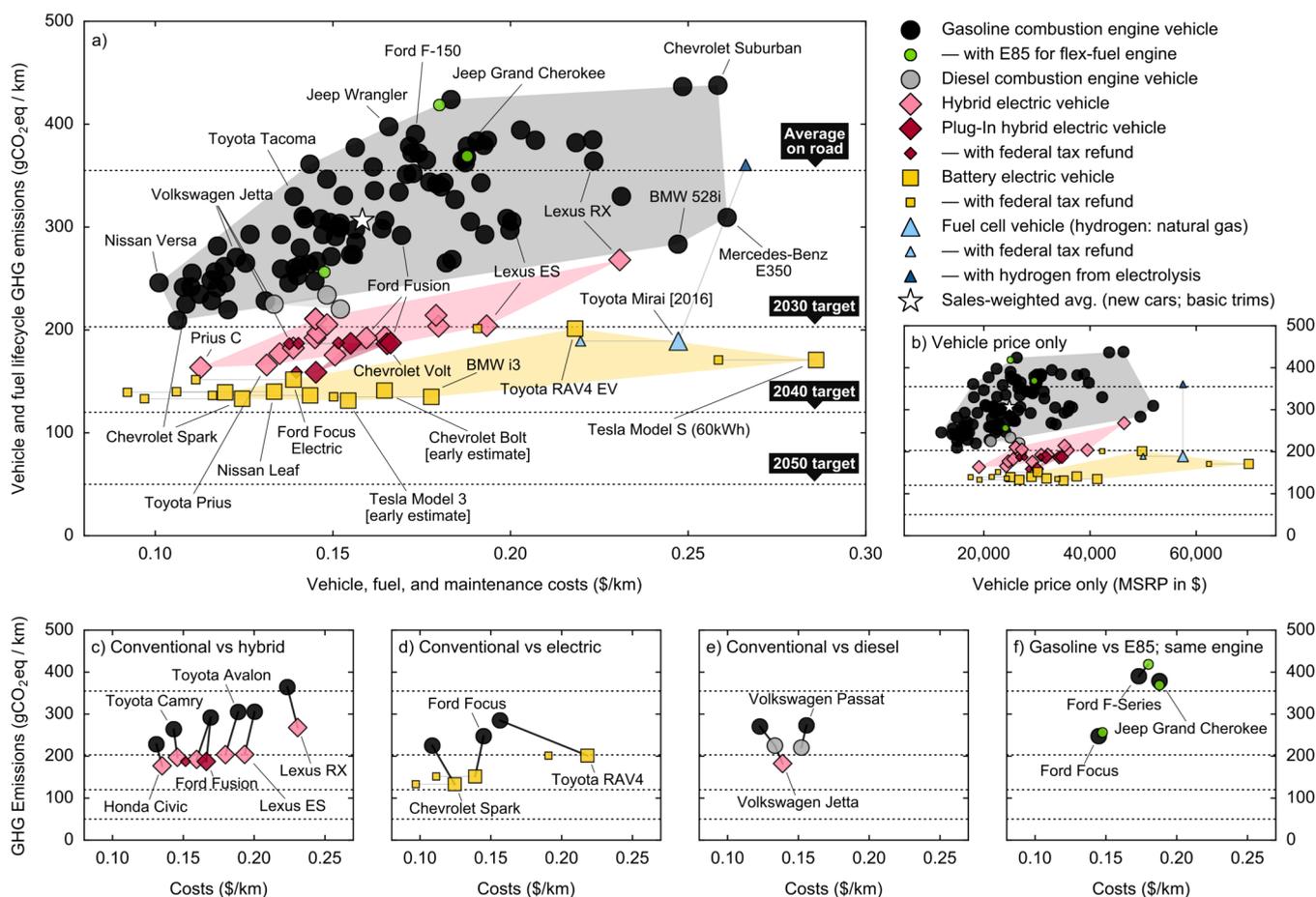


Figure 1. (a) Cost-carbon space for light-duty vehicles, assuming a 14 year lifetime, 12 100 miles driven annually, and an 8% discount rate. Data points show the most popular internal-combustion-engine vehicles (ICEVs; including standard, diesel, and E85 corn-ethanol combustion), hybrid electric vehicles (HEVs), plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs), and battery electric vehicles (BEVs) in 2014, as well as one of the first fully commercial fuel-cell vehicles (FCVs). For most models, the most affordable trim is analyzed. For models that are offered with different powertrain technologies, the trims are adjusted to match feature sets. The shaded areas are a visual approximation of the space covered by these models. The emission intensity of electricity used assumes the average U.S. electricity mix (623 gCO₂eq/kWh). The FCV is modeled for hydrogen produced either by electrolysis or by steam methane reforming. Horizontal dotted lines indicate GHG emission targets in 2030, 2040, and 2050 intended to be consistent with holding global warming below 2 °C. Panel b shows the same as panel a but for upfront vehicle prices only, based on MSRPs. (c–f) Comparisons of different powertrain technologies used in the same car models ("conventional" powertrains include gasoline and diesel combustion engines). Because trims of these comparisons are harmonized, some models (mostly ICEVs) would be available in more affordable versions with fewer features. For PHEVs and BEVs, the impact of the federal tax refund is also shown. Costs are given in 2014 U.S. dollars.

320 gasoline, \$3.39/gal for diesel, \$2.51/gal for E85, and \$0.121/
 321 kWh for electricity. Hydrogen prices are estimated to be \$4.00/
 322 kg for hydrogen from methane and \$7.37/kg for hydrogen from
 323 electrolysis, estimated based on average industrial electricity
 324 and natural gas prices. A more detailed description of how these
 325 values were determined can be found in the [Supporting](#)
 326 [Information](#). We also investigate the effect of variability in these
 327 prices over time and across locations within the U.S.

328 The costs of tires and regular maintenance are modeled in a
 329 simplified manner, assuming a total of \$895 per year for sedan
 330 ICEVs and HEVs and \$1013 per year for SUVs and pickups.⁴⁸
 331 A German study found that regular maintenance costs of BEVs
 332 may be a third lower than those of ICEVs;⁴⁹ this reduction is
 333 applied to BEVs and FCVs. For PHEVs, maintenance costs are
 334 lowered by one-sixth. Batteries and fuel cells are assumed to last
 335 the entire lifetime of every vehicle, and fuel economies are
 336 assumed to stay constant. The sensitivity of the cost estimates
 337 and the results to these assumptions is presented in [sections S2](#)
 338 [and S3 in the Supporting Information](#).

Evaluating Vehicle GHG Emission-Reduction Path- 339
ways. Future prospects for reducing vehicle GHG emission 340
 intensities are assessed on the basis of potential improvements 341
 in powertrain efficiency, aerodynamic drag, tire rolling 342
 resistance, and weight (without decreasing vehicle size, which 343
 is evaluated separately). We base estimates of potential fuel 344
 consumption reductions by 2050 on a recent comprehensive 345
 report.⁵⁰ However, we do not use the projected values for 2050. 346
 Rather, we use the arithmetic mean of projections for 2030 and 347
 2050. We do this because some vehicles today may already 348
 include some of the projected improvements; and we limit the 349
 curb weight reductions (which are also taken into account in 350
 calculating vehicle cycle emissions) to 15%, whereas the authors 351
 in ref 50 assume 15% by 2030 and 30% by 2050. On the basis 352
 of this analysis, we apply estimates of maximum possible fuel 353
 consumption reductions by 2050 of 40% for ICEVs, 45% for 354
 HEVs and PHEVs in charge-sustaining mode, 30% for BEVs 355
 and PHEVs in charge-depleting mode, and 35% for FCVs. 356

We also examine the effect of changing production pathways 357
 for electricity and fuels. We consider changes to lifecycle GHG 358

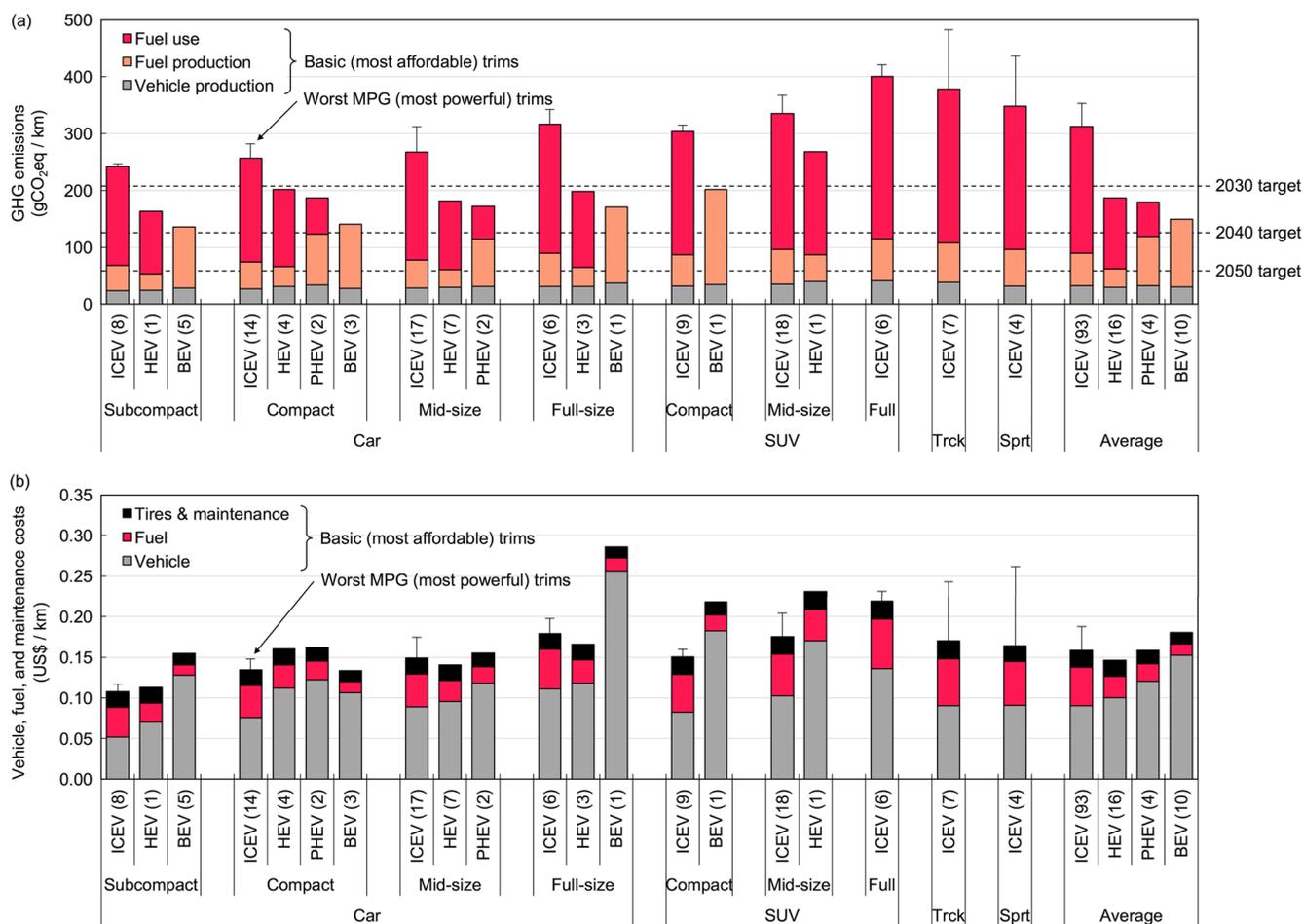


Figure 2. Sales-weighted averages by vehicle class, size, and technology of (a) GHG emissions and (b) costs for the data shown in Figure 1. The shaded bars represent the averages when the most affordable trim is analyzed, as in Figure 1. The error bars represent the averages when analyzing the trim with the worst fuel economy for each model (only ICEVs have trims with substantially different fuel economies for each model). The numbers in brackets represent the number of vehicle models considered for each group. SUV = sport utility vehicle; Trck = pickup truck; Sprt = sports car.

emissions when a low-carbon electricity mix is used to charge electric vehicles and when biofuels are used to fuel combustion engines. For the low-carbon electricity mix, we assume a hypothetical energy-supply portfolio composed of 50% wind and 12.5% each of hydro, solar photovoltaic, biomass, and nuclear energy. Using GREET 2014, this mix results in emissions of 24 g CO₂ eq/kWh, including the indirect effects of reducing carbon emissions from manufacturing and constructing power-generation equipment. The electricity mix not only affects the GHG emissions of BEVs and PHEVs (due to charging) but also the carbon intensity of the production of vehicles and fuels for all powertrain technologies.

RESULTS

GHG Emissions and Costs of 125 Popular Cars in the United States. We find that GHG emissions and costs vary considerably across popular vehicle models, both within and across powertrain technologies, with lower emissions generally corresponding to lower costs. Alternative powertrain technologies (HEVs, PHEVs, and BEVs) exhibit systematically lower lifecycle GHG emissions than ICEVs but do not necessarily cost the consumer more (Figure 1a). As one example, the most popular BEV, the Nissan Leaf, costs 20% less than the sales-weighted average ICEV in 2014 when vehicle,

fuel, and maintenance costs are considered. Even before including tax refunds, the compact version of the Nissan Leaf matches the cost of the average compact ICEV sold in 2014 (Figures 1 and 2). At the same time, the Leaf has half the GHG emissions intensity of the average ICEV sold in 2014 and 38% less than the average compact ICEV. In contrast to the trade-off between costs and GHG emissions reported for electricity,³² where electric utilities are the consumers of energy conversion technologies and fuels, there is no such trade-off faced by consumers of vehicles.

Among alternative powertrain technologies and fuels, BEVs offer the lowest emissions, followed by PHEVs and HEVs, and then diesel engines and FCVs. Vehicles fueled by diesel are among the lowest-emitting ICEVs in the set examined here, while those using E85 (assuming corn-based ethanol) do not reduce emissions relative to gasoline (Figure 1f); the CO₂eq emissions per gallon of E85 fuel are 22% lower than those of gasoline (determined based on GREET data), but this advantage is offset by the lower fuel economies achieved with E85 in flex-fuel engines. For the one FCV model examined (Toyota Mirai), emissions reductions are only achieved when hydrogen is producing using SMR. When hydrogen from electrolysis is used, the Toyota Mirai's emissions are almost

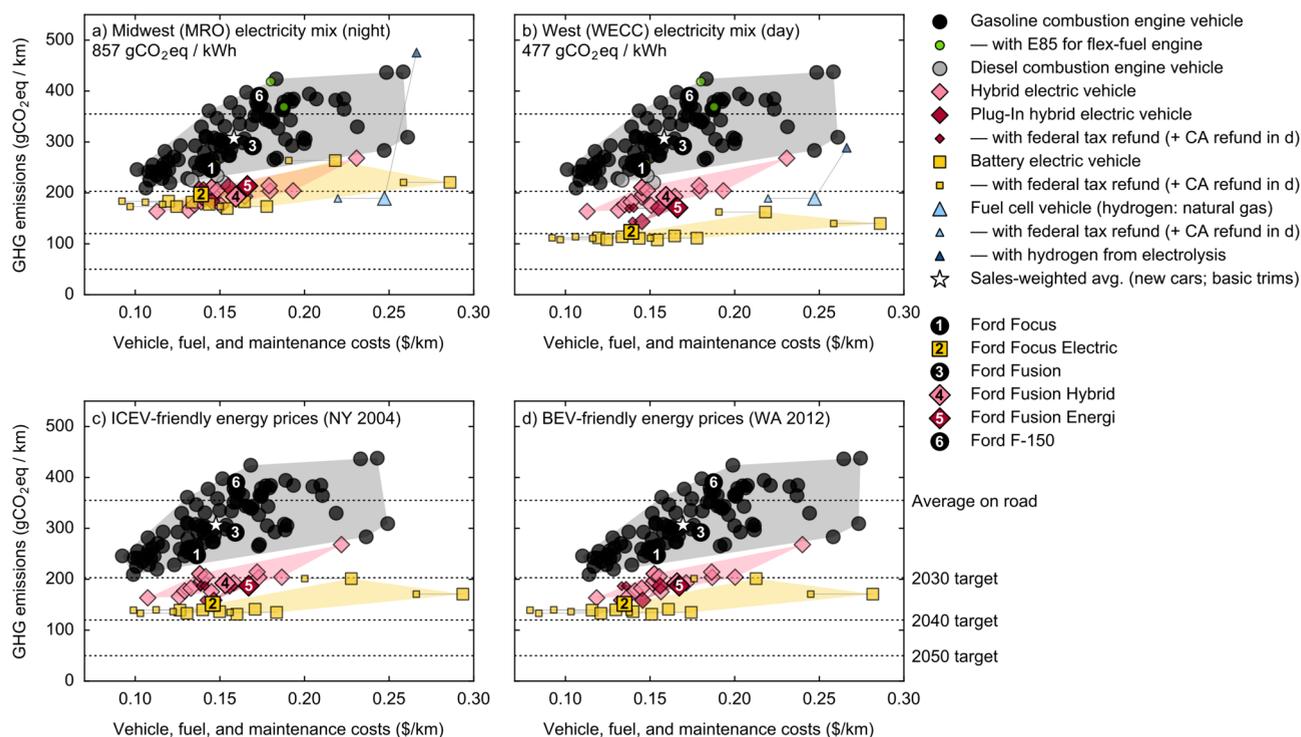


Figure 3. Cost-carbon space of light-duty vehicles as in Figure 1a, shown for four different cases: (a) a lower carbon intensity electricity mix, using the emissions intensity of electricity of the Midwest during nighttime charging;⁵¹ (b) a higher carbon intensity electricity mix, using the emissions intensity of electricity of the West during daytime charging (note that the region has a larger impact on the emission intensity of electricity generation than the time of day of charging);⁵¹ (c) an ICEV-friendly energy price scenario, using average inflation-adjusted prices from New York State in 2004 (\$2.43/gal for gasoline and \$0.178/kWh and federal tax refunds only); and (d) a BEV-friendly energy price scenario, using average inflation-adjusted prices from Washington State in 2012 (\$3.88/gal for gasoline and \$0.086/kWh for electricity) and combined federal and state (CA) tax refunds.

405 almost at the same level as some of the highest-emitting ICEVs
406 on the market.

407 The regional variability of the electricity mix has a
408 considerable impact on the emissions reduction potential of
409 BEVs and PHEVs (Figure 3a,b). Based on a calculation of
410 regionalized marginal emission factors of electricity,⁵¹ we find
411 that under relatively low carbon intensity electricity conditions,
412 such as the Western Electricity Coordinating Council (WECC)
413 with daytime charging (477 gCO₂eq/kWh, Figure 3b),
414 emissions from today's BEVs are reduced by about 50%
415 compared to ICEVs and by about 25% compared to HEVs. In
416 regions with high carbon intensities of electricity, for example
417 the Midwest Reliability Organization (MRO) with nighttime
418 charging (857 gCO₂eq/kWh, Figure 3a), BEVs do not
419 outperform (P)HEVs, and they emit only about 25% less
420 than comparable ICEVs.

421 A comparison of the costs and GHG emissions of various
422 powertrain technology and fuel options for the same vehicle
423 model provides further perspective. We find that alternative
424 powertrain technologies often do not cost more for the same
425 vehicle model (Figure 1c–f). About half of the HEVs result in
426 lower costs to the consumer than their ICEV counterparts
427 (Figure 1c). For two BEV models, there is a substantial cost
428 penalty on the order of 20–40%. The Ford Focus BEV and the
429 Ford Fusion PHEV, however, were found to be cheaper overall
430 than the combustion engine version (Figure 1c,d). Moreover,
431 the federal tax refund currently offered means that most PHEV
432 and BEV models come at a considerable cost advantage
433 compared to their equivalent ICEV models. This is especially

the case when combined with state tax refunds also available in
some regions (Figure 3d).

When only the purchasing prices (upfront costs) of the
vehicles are considered, the comparison, based on current costs,
shifts in favor of ICEVs (Figure 1b). If consumers are more
sensitive to the vehicle purchasing price than to overall lifecycle
costs, due to a limited budget for purchasing a vehicle and
limited access to financing, they may perceive ICEVs to be
more affordable. In addition, some studies suggest that
consumers do not fully account for fuel costs when making
vehicle purchasing decisions.⁵²

One consequence of the higher up-front costs and lower fuel
costs of alternative powertrains, particularly BEVs, can be a
more stable driving cost over time. Because of the higher fuel
cost contribution to the per-distance lifetime cost of driving an
ICEV (Figure 2), a changing fuel price can cause the cost of
driving to fluctuate more, leaving consumers with a less-
predictable driving cost over the lifetime of the vehicle. The
difference can be considerable, with fuel costs contributing 31%
to total costs in the case of ICEVs and only 9% in the case of
BEVs, determined based on a sales-weighted average (Figure
2). The effect can be amplified by the fact that gasoline prices
tend to vary more than (consumer) electricity prices over time.
Across geographical locations, however, electricity prices vary
more than gasoline prices. In Figure 3c,d, we examine the
combined impact of spatial and temporal variation in fuel costs
by comparing a strongly ICEV-friendly price scenario (Figure
3c) against a strongly BEV-friendly price scenario (Figure 3d)
based on inflation-adjusted annual average prices in the lower
48 U.S. states between 2003 and 2015.⁴⁷ Also, whereas the

464 ICEV-friendly scenario shows the effect of only federal tax
 465 refunds, the BEV-friendly scenario shows the effect of
 466 combined federal and state (CA) refunds. We find that in
 467 going from the ICEV-friendly to the BEV-friendly scenario, the
 468 average ICEV becomes 15% more expensive, the average HEV
 469 becomes 9% more expensive, the average PHEV stays the same,
 470 and the average BEV becomes 6% less expensive. Although
 471 these changes do not substantially shift the relative positions of
 472 the different technologies in the cost-carbon space, they can
 473 have a considerable impact on the cost-competitiveness of
 474 specific models.

475 **Vehicles Evaluated against Climate Targets.** Several
 476 currently available vehicles meet the 2030 average GHG
 477 intensity target, although none meet the more stringent 2040
 478 and 2050 targets (Figures 1 and 2). Those vehicles meeting the
 479 2030 target include several HEVs, PHEVs, and BEVs, as well as
 480 the Toyota Mirai FCV when operated with hydrogen from
 481 SMR (Figure 1a). None of the ICEV vehicles meet the 2030
 482 target, although some come very close. Meeting the 2030 target
 483 would therefore require that consumer powertrain choices
 484 change well in advance of 2030 (likely by 2025 or earlier) given
 485 the time required for the operating fleet to mirror the average
 486 carbon intensity of new vehicles. Alternatively, major improve-
 487 ments to ICEV efficiencies and substantial downsizing could
 488 allow gasoline-fueled ICEVs to fall below the 2030 target,
 489 though not the 2040 and 2050 targets (Figure 4).

intensities of today's BEVs (charged with electricity at the
 current U.S. average GHG emissions intensity).

Some of the "best-case" second-generation biofuels promise
 greater emission reductions for ICEVs. The average 2014
 ICEV, equipped with an E85-capable combustion engine and
 operated with switchgrass, would reach the 2040
 target. The same average car, equipped with a diesel engine and
 operated with biodiesel from wood residuals, would surpass it.

The greatest emissions savings, however, are expected from
 decarbonizing the electricity mix, and only technologies that
 can benefit most from this are able to reach the 2050 GHG
 emissions intensity target (Figure 4). The lowest GHG
 emissions are achieved by BEVs, at 32 gCO₂eq/km. The
 Toyota Mirai FCV operated with hydrogen from electrolysis
 results in GHG emissions that are nearly comparable to BEVs
 under this scenario. However, the overall electricity con-
 sumption per distance driven is almost three times higher for
 the Mirai. This is the reason why the GHG emissions of the
 Mirai, when driven with hydrogen from electrolysis, are so
 sensitive to the carbon intensity of the electricity mix.

To illustrate a possible scenario for reaching the 2040 and
 2050 targets, we consider the effects of the electrification of
 transportation and the simultaneous decarbonization of
 electricity. Figure 5a depicts the average emission intensity of

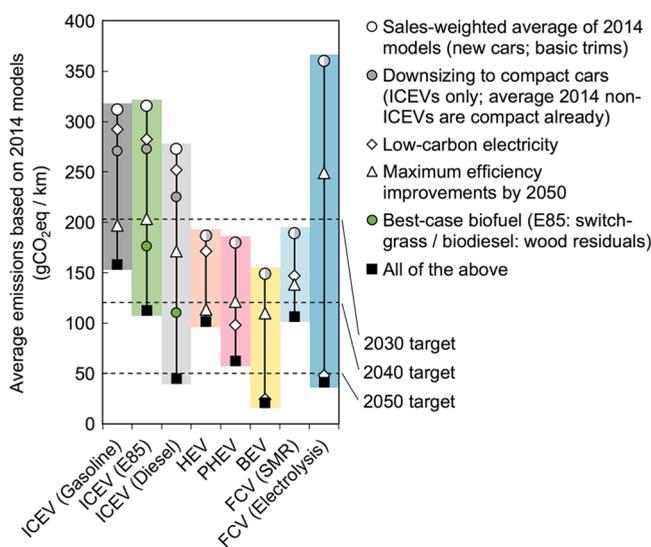


Figure 4. Average GHG emissions intensities of each powertrain technology in response to vehicle downsizing, a low-carbon (zero-fossil-fuel) electricity supply mix (24 gCO₂eq/kWh), efficiency improvements, the use of future biofuels (for ICEVs), and the combination of all factors. Efficiency improvements include a 15% weight reduction and reduced fuel consumptions of 40% (ICEVs), 45% (HEV and PHEVs in charge-sustaining mode), 30% (BEV and PHEVs in charge-depleting mode), and 35% (FCV).⁵⁰

490 As shown in Figure 4, emission reductions due to estimated
 491 improvement potentials of fuel economies⁵⁰ are higher for
 492 combustion-engine vehicles (ICEVs and HEVs) than for
 493 electric vehicles (PHEVs, BEVs, and FCVs). Even if these
 494 fuel-economy improvements and other emissions-reducing
 495 changes are achieved, however, gasoline-powered non-hybrid
 496 ICEVs may never be able to drop below the emission

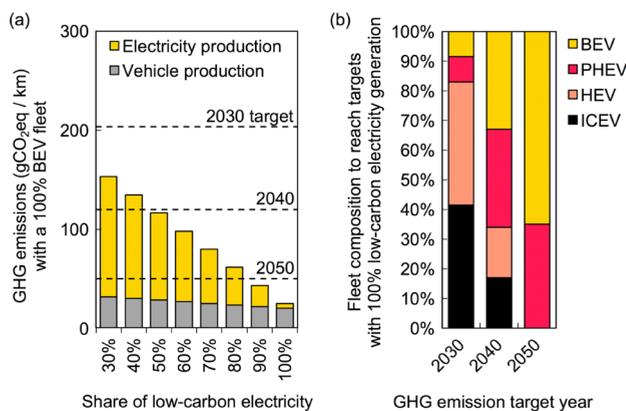


Figure 5. (a) GHG emissions as a function of the share of low-carbon electricity (24 gCO₂eq/kWh) if the entire fleet consists of the average 2014 BEV model (see Figure 4). The low-carbon share ranges from 30% (close to the 32% current share) to 100%. (b) Examples of powertrain technology shares that meet the GHG emission targets if electricity is generated from 100% low-carbon sources, using the average emissions of the 2014 models (see Figure 4).

a hypothetical LDV fleet consisting entirely of BEVs, based on
 the sales-weighted average of 2014's BEV models. Under this
 scenario, no improvements to the carbon intensity of electricity
 production would be necessary to meet the 2030 target because
 the average 2014 BEV surpasses that target with the current
 average U.S. electricity mix. In fact, as Figure 3a shows, even in
 regions of the U.S. with very high carbon intensities of
 electricity, many BEVs and (P)HEVs meet the 2030 target.
 Later targets do require reductions, however. To meet the 2040
 target, the share of low-carbon electricity generation
 technologies would need to reach about 50%. To meet the
 2050 target, a share of more than 80% would be necessary. In
 section S2.1 of the Supporting Information, we show the
 vehicle cost-carbon space when using a fully decarbonized
 electricity mix, considering different electricity-price scenarios.

536 Interestingly, these emissions-reduction targets for electricity
537 are less stringent than they would be for the electricity sector
538 when applying a similar approach to that used here.³² This is in
539 part because electric vehicles have a higher efficiency of
540 conversion from primary energy to energy at the wheel than the
541 dominant vehicle technologies used today. The implication is
542 that if the electricity end-use sector meets its targets, the
543 decarbonization would be more than enough to achieve LDV
544 transportation targets under a full electrification of trans-
545 portation.

546 Another scenario that meets the 2050 target is a partial
547 electrification of transportation but a full decarbonization of
548 electricity. In Figure 5b, we analyze the powertrain technology
549 mix required to meet a target if electricity were to be generated
550 using low-carbon technologies only. The 2030 target could be
551 reached with a fleet consisting almost entirely of ICEVs and
552 HEVs, even if no improvements in efficiency are assumed. To
553 meet the 2040 target, however, a considerable share of PHEVs
554 and BEVs would be necessary. The 2050 target is likely to
555 require a virtually ICEV-free fleet consisting almost entirely of
556 BEVs and PHEVs.

557 ■ DISCUSSION

558 This paper presents an approach to quantify the diversity of
559 carbon emissions across the U.S. LDV market against climate
560 mitigation targets, with the goal of better informing three
561 categories of decision-makers: car owners, car manufacturers,
562 and transportation policymakers. Our analysis identifies choices
563 available to consumers of vehicles and insights that can inform
564 directed innovation efforts by policymakers and car manufac-
565 turers. Together, these stakeholders will dictate progress in
566 decarbonizing the transportation sector and whether a
567 transition occurs at a speed and scale commensurate with
568 climate-policy goals.

569 Despite the broad spectrum of vehicle costs and carbon
570 intensities offered (within the 125 vehicles examined, there is a
571 400% spread between the lowest- and highest-emitting cars and
572 a 250% spread between the cheapest and most expensive),
573 several clear patterns emerge. We find that the least-emitting
574 cars also tend to be the most affordable ones within and, in
575 many cases, even across different powertrain technologies.
576 Although the average carbon intensity of vehicles sold in 2014
577 exceeds the 2030 climate target by more than 50%, most
578 available (P)HEVs and BEVs meet this goal.

579 A primary takeaway for car buyers is that vehicle decarbon-
580 ization compatible with future climate targets can only be
581 achieved by transitioning away from ICEVs, principally to
582 (P)HEVs and BEVs. We find that with today's options, the
583 average consumer is able to choose (P)HEVs and BEVs at little
584 to no additional cost over similarly sized ICEVs once the
585 existing tax refunds for PHEVs and BEVs are taken into
586 account. Our analysis helps highlight the extent of cost-carbon
587 savings that car buyers forego by opting for traditional ICEVs
588 over alternative lower-cost, lower-carbon technologies.

589 Meeting the 2030 climate target requires that by well before
590 2030, the emissions intensity of the average new car must be as
591 low as that of today's average HEVs and PHEVs. Thereafter,
592 sufficient vehicle-emissions reductions will likely require both
593 the electrification of the vehicle fleet and a large and rapid
594 decarbonization of the electricity generation sector (40% by
595 2040 and 80% by 2050). This finding corroborates previously
596 proposed climate-mitigation scenarios at state,^{53–55} national,⁵⁶
597 and global scales.⁵⁷ However, by examining technology choices

from the perspective of consumers (key decisionmakers in any
future low-carbon transition), our study goes a step further in
illuminating technological development and policy pathways
that might reach these goals.

An all-electric fleet would increase 2050 electricity
consumption in the U.S. by an estimated 1315 TWh per
year, or about 28%, if all cars were replaced by today's Ford
Focus Electric, for example. This figure would increase to 73%
if all cars were replaced by a Toyota Mirai FCV (with an
efficiency of electrolysis, compression, and storage of 62%).³⁵
Accordingly, it will be important for public and private actors to
address infrastructure integration challenges such as charging
stations and demands on the electricity-supply system,^{29,38,59}
monitor materials scalability,^{60–62} avoid environmental-burden
shifting,^{16,63,64} and identify alternative road infrastructure
revenue streams to today's per-gallon taxes on liquid fuels
like gasoline and diesel.⁶⁵ One of the most important
technological developments may be an increase in the vehicle
range of affordable BEVs, although recent research has shown
that the typical daily transportation energy needs of most
drivers in the U.S. would be met by the relatively low-cost
electric vehicles available on the market today.⁶⁶

In addressing the GHG emission challenge of the personal
transportation sector, consumer behavior should be taken into
account when designing government policies. Policies designed
to nudge car buyers toward carbon-saving powertrain
technologies and vehicle sizes and classes will likely be
important. Additionally, strategies for reducing travel demand
can play a critical role and might include discouraging rebound
effects,⁶⁷ implementing road pricing^{68,69} and information-
feedback traffic-management systems,^{70,71} and ensuring that
any eventual proliferation of autonomous vehicles helps lower,
rather than raise, miles traveled.^{72,73}

Even with the most beneficial behavioral changes, however, a
fundamental transition away from ICEVs will be required to
meet future GHG emission targets. Overall, we conclude that
there are already cost incentives in many contexts for
consumers to begin this transition. Further reducing costs
(especially vehicle manufacturing costs) of BEVs and other low-
carbon technologies (for example, through learning-by-doing,
research and development, and economies of scale),^{74–76}
providing favorable financing, and better informing consumers
of the lifecycle cost benefits of more efficient technologies, will
likely all be important measures. Given the unprecedented
speed and scale of the simultaneous transformations in energy
and transportation needed, the joint support of government
energy and climate policy, manufacturing innovation, and
conscientious consumer decision-making will be key.

■ ASSOCIATED CONTENT

Supporting Information

The Supporting Information is available free of charge on the
ACS Publications website at DOI: 10.1021/acs.est.6b00177.

An expanded discussion of GHG emission targets, cost-
carbon space of current LDVs under varying conditions,
sensitivities of costs and emissions subject to various
parameter uncertainties, and the calculation of emissions
and costs. Figures showing sensitivity analysis for the
GHG emission targets for personal LDVs, a cost-carbon
plot showing a low-carbon electricity mix, and the results
of sensitivity analyses. Tables showing parameter values
for sensitivity analyses, GHG emissions and cost factors

659 of the fuel and vehicle cycles, and input data for all
660 vehicles analyzed. (PDF)

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666 Notes

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