Last week, the European Car Manufacturers Association (ACEA) weighed in on how it thinks diesel emissions should be regulated in the future. The head of the organization said diesels release 15–20% less carbon dioxide than their gasoline-powered counterparts. And who is the head of ACEA? Why, it is no less a personage than Dieter Zetsche, CEO of Daimler, the parent company of Mercedes-Benz.

The diesel engine is like a religion in Europe. It was first promoted by governments as a way to fight back against the OPEC oil embargoes of the 1970s. Since then, taxes on diesel fuel have been lower than those on gasoline. Coupled with other economic incentives, the lower cost of driving means that 70% of all diesel-powered cars manufactured each year are sold in Europe.

The great Volkswagen cheating scandal of 2015 put a huge dent in diesel’s reputation. Volkswagen got caught, but it soon came out that virtually all the other companies who sell cars in Europe were doing much the same thing. Diesel sales have plunged and regulators now want to toughen emissions rules for diesel engine emissions.

Yet taxes on diesel fuel are still lower than for gasoline. The European Federation for Transport and Environment (T&E) claims European governments lost more than $30 billion last year as a result of those lower taxes. But diesel cars have made a lot of money for the manufacturers over the years. Faced with the rapidly approaching age of electric cars, they would love to keep the diesel gravy train going just a little while longer. That desire has resulted in a concerted campaign of diesel greenwashing by the manufacturers and their principal suppliers.

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ACEA's pitch to regulators is the same as what is often heard on the other side of the pond from US automakers: **Nobody wants to buy electric cars!** And besides, there is no adequate charging infrastructure in place for them. Let us continue selling our diesel cars and we will meet your proposed goal of reducing emissions by another 20%.

Not so fast, says T&E. By their calculations, diesel cars actually emit **9.3% more CO2 than gasoline cars in real-world driving.** And besides, what about the **nitrous oxide emissions** that diesels spew out of their tailpipes? The Allgemeiner Deutscher Automobil-Club known as the ADAC (think AAA for the autobahn) has tested 188 diesel cars recently. It’s findings are little comfort to the industry and are reflected in the chart below. All cars tested are supposed to meet the Euro 6 emissions standard in place since 2013.

![Stickoxid-Emissionen im Durchschnitt nach Hersteller](image)

BMW came out on top, with Renault in last place, but don't start cheering yet. The BMW score was 0.141 grams of nitrous oxides per kilometer. The Euro 6 standard calls for no more than 0.080 grams per kilometer. In other words, **none of the 188 cars tested were in compliance with the current rules. A Renault Grand Scenic 160 dCi releases as much nitrogen oxides as about 240 BMW 520d cars,** claims the ADAC report. In testing, that particular model emitted 1,674 milligrams per kilometer.

The ADAC report suggests that all manufacturers will need to find ways to retrofit their existing diesel engines to bring them into compliance with existing regulations, never mind making them comply with stricter requirements due to take effect when the Euro 7 standard becomes effective.

Sorry, Dieter Zetsche, your diesel greenwashing is just so much hogwash. The sooner diesel cars are eliminated from Europe, the sooner Europeans will start living longer and enjoying better health during their lifetimes. Believe it or not, some things are more important that profits.

Hat tip to Gas2 European correspondent and Tesla Model S owner Lief Hansen of Bergen, Norway.

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Tags: diesel emissions, diesel greenwashing, Euro7 regulations, nitrous oxide emissions

About the Author

Steve Hanley writes about the interface between technology and sustainability from his home in Rhode Island. You can follow him on Google+ and on Twitter. "There may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice, but there must never be a time when we fail to protest." Elie Wiesel

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Nitrous oxides are *far* worse than CO2. The emissions standards should be in terms of CO2 equivalents. In that case, CO2 = 1, N2O is 298. Diesels should be banned totally and completely now, now, now!

"298 x – nitrous oxide (N2O) – I.e. Releasing 1 kg of N2O into the atmosphere is about equivalent to releasing 298 kg of CO2"

from: https://climatechangeconnection...

While this is true, you have to look at the gross amount of CO2 and NOx emitted by cars. CO2 is in the 80-250 grams per km range for most european cars; NOx is limited to 0.08 grams per km in Euro 6 diesels (0.06 for petrol). You will have to add a percentage to take into account the cheating or real world driving conditions for both petrol and diesel cars. Also, not all the NOx from cars is N2O (the one with the GHG properties).

Except "NOx" refers to "Nitrogen Oxides" not "Nitrous Oxides" which are very different.

Sources:
https://en.m.wikipedia.org/...
http://www.hybridcars.com/in/...

In fact, NOx are "global cooling" gasses and actually reverse the warming affects of greenhouse gasses like CO2 and N2O. NOx are not regulated because of global warming reasons but instead because they can form smog under certain conditions.

Sources:
https://en.m.wikipedia.org/...
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The only relevant info in that graph is that none of the numbers is zero..

European automakers only keep proving that they don't even have a right to be at the table with regulators. This immoral corruption needs to end now. How many more Europeans need to die simply for profits?

Desperately disgusting !

Just add £100/€100/$100 per mg over the Euro 6 limit as Car Emission Purchase tax - I'm sue that will most likely drive consumers to petrol or electric. Do something similar for CO2 on petrol based cars and we'll all be electric.