

## Environmental Protection Agency

### Fuel Economy Label – Phase 1 Focus Group Moderator Guide

#### Introduction (8 minutes)

- Moderator introduces herself/himself.
- [Explain:] A focus group is a group discussion where we can learn more in-depth about peoples' ideas and opinions (compared to telephone or written surveys).
- My job is to facilitate the discussion and make sure that everyone has an opportunity to speak **and to make sure that no one dominates the conversation.**
- Mention observers in separate room.
- Housekeeping – Toilets and refreshments.
- Mention ground rules:
  - o There is no right or wrong answer; we're interested in your honest and candid opinions and ideas.
  - o Our discussion is totally confidential. We will not use your name or contact information in any report.
  - o Our discussion today is being recorded. These recordings allow us to write a more complete report, and to make sure we accurately reflect your opinions. However, please only speak one at a time, so that the recorder can pick up all your comments.
  - o It is important to tell YOUR thoughts, not what you think others will think, or what you think others want to hear.
  - o Please turn off cell phones
  - o Your stipend will be provided as you leave.
  - o Relax and enjoy

Thank you all for participating in the survey we sent to you in advance. Today we will continue the discussion talking about new car purchases. Any questions before we begin?

- Let's start off by getting to know a little more about each other. I'd like us to go around the room with each person answering the following questions:
  - Your first name
  - When did you buy your last new vehicle?
  - What type of vehicle did you buy recently (make and model)?
  - Did you consider buying a hybrid, or clean diesel, or some other alternative fuel vehicle?

## Current Label Use (10 minutes)

1. What were the top two things that influenced your vehicle choice?
2. Did you use the fuel economy label when deciding on your new vehicle purchase? Why or why not? How did you use it? Then show participants a large size example of the current label (as well as 8 x11 copy for each participant) and ask what information on the label most influenced their purchasing decision. Probe *briefly* on why.

## Fuel Consumption Metric (35 minutes)

**SHOW THEM THE CURRENT LABEL AND SHOW THEM THAT IT HAS COMPONENTS FOR MPG, FUEL COSTS, ETC. THEN EXPLAIN THAT WE ARE GOING TO LOOK AT FUEL CONSUMPTION FOR A NEW LABEL SEPARATELY, BUT THAT IT WILL EVENTUALLY BE PART OF A TOTAL LABEL.**

3. When you think of fuel consumption, how do you think about it? (Listen for mpg, miles per tank full, gallons to go a particular distance, how often they have to fill the tank.)
4. The current label includes mpg for both city and highway. What does mpg mean to you? Is this useful information? Why or why not?
5. (Hand out the fuel consumption metric work sheets and the individual copies of the designs. Show them the 4 options on large boards.)

Then instruct them to “indicate on your worksheet which option is most understandable and which is least understandable. For each choice write brief bullet points explaining why.”

Moderator then tallies rankings and opens up to discussion regarding reasons behind their choices. (Probe on which of the 4 options explains fuel consumption most effectively? Test correct interpretation of metrics by asking what the metrics mean, if they are ‘easy to understand’.)

6. If the label had a sentence that said:
  - In the city, this vehicle would use approximately 4.5 gallons of gasoline to travel 100 miles.
  - On the highway, this vehicle would use approximately 3.3 gallons of gasoline to travel 100 miles.

Would that be more helpful or less helpful compared to the metric that appears on the label? Why?

7. Which of the four options would make you most likely to purchase a fuel efficient vehicle? Why?

8. Can you suggest other ways to express this information visually?
9. If this information was available on the label, would you use it in your decision about which vehicle to purchase? Why or why not? If so, at what point?
10. Some of the options we've shown you include a comparison to all other vehicles. Does having this assist you in choosing the most fuel efficient vehicle? Why or why not? Is it useful to also have such a fuel consumption comparison in regard to vehicles in your class? Why or why not?
11. We've also shown you several ways to show the 'comparison to all other vehicles (show them on the labels mounted on boards). Does it make it easier to understand the fuel consumption information? Is it too much information? Do you think it would help you with your vehicle decision? Why or why not?
12. What type of driving do you do? Mostly highway, mostly city, some combination? All of the options we've shown you include both city mpg and highway mpg. If the label could just show one of these, which one would make you more likely to choose a fuel efficient vehicle? Why?
  - City mpg
  - Highway mpg
  - Combined mpg
13. Remind them of the example of the "mpg illusion" from the pre-group survey. Show the following on flip chart:

Current vehicle	New vehicle	Fuel Saved Over 10,000 miles going from current vehicle to new vehicle
A. 15 mpg	20 mpg	167 gallons
B. 30 mpg	35 mpg	47 gallons

Ask: If you had the choice of 'gallons per hundred miles' or mpg, which would you use? Why?

14. Range of comparable vehicles. (Show 4 examples of the same design – one with 'within class' and one 'within class' and 'for all vehicles'. 2 will emphasize 'gallons per 100 miles' and the other 2 will emphasize 'mpg'.) Hand out the 4 comparable designs sheet. Tell them that some vehicles will compare well to other vehicles in their class and to all vehicles. But other vehicles may compare well within class, but not well when compared to all vehicles.
  - Which of the 4 labels would be most useful to them? Why?
  - Discuss where the same vehicle falls on scale in regard to 'gallons per 100 miles' vs. 'mpg'.
  - If the vehicle you recently purchased had ratings that showed it was better 'within class' compared to 'all vehicles' how would you feel about your choice? Use choice 5B1 as an example. (Probe on whether they feel guilty or not.)

## Fuel Cost Metric (25 minutes)

**SHOW THEM THE CURRENT LABEL AND SHOW THEM THAT IT HAS COMPONENTS FOR MPG, FUEL COSTS, ETC. THEN EXPLAIN THAT WE ARE NOW GOING TO LOOK AT FUEL COST FOR A NEW LABEL SEPARATELY, BUT THAT IT WILL EVENTUALLY BE PART OF A TOTAL LABEL.**

**15.** Did you notice the average annual fuel cost information on the current label when you purchased your most recent vehicle? (Show current label.) How do you think about this fuel cost information on the current label? Did you use this information in making your decision? Why or why not?

We would now like to explore talking about cost. Understanding that cost per year depends greatly on variables such as fuel price, driving patterns and mix of city and highway driving, any approach we use would rely on basic assumptions such as a person drives 15K miles a year and gas costs \$3.00 a gallon.

**16.** The current label shows *annual* costs. Are there other ways to express cost that would be more useful (salient) to you? (Write their suggestions on flip chart and probe on the why behind their suggestions. If they don't mention monthly, 5-year, weekly, cost per 100 miles, cost per mile, add these to the list and get their reactions to these.) Show them actual numbers (on a handout sheet) for each of the following metrics and ask which of these is most useful to them.

- Annual
- Monthly
- 5-year
- Weekly
- Cost per mile **(BE SURE TO PROBE ON .12 OR 12 CENTS)**
- Cost per 100 miles

Then show board with the combinations and ask what combination of these, if any, would be the most powerful? Why?

**17.** (Hand out the fuel cost metric work sheet and the individual copies of the designs. Show them the 4 options on large boards.)

Then instruct them to "indicate on your worksheet which option is most understandable and which is least understandable. For each choice write brief bullet points explaining why."

Moderator then tallies rankings and opens up to discussion regarding reasons behind their choices. (Probe on which of the 4 options explains fuel costs most effectively? Test correct interpretation of metrics by asking what the metrics mean, if they are 'easy to understand'.)

**18.** Which of the four options would make you most likely to purchase a fuel efficient vehicle? Why?

**19.** Can you suggest other ways to express this information visually?

20. If this information was available on the label, would you use it in your decision about which vehicle to purchase? Why or why not? If so, at what point?
21. Some of the options we've shown you include a comparison to all other vehicles. Does having this assist you in choosing the most fuel efficient vehicle? Why or why not? Is it useful to also have such a fuel cost comparison in regard to vehicles in your class? Why or why not?
22. We've also shown you several ways to show the comparison to all other vehicles (show them on the labels mounted on boards). Does it make it easier to understand the fuel consumption information? Is it too much information? Do you think it would help you with your vehicle decision? Why or why not?
23. Then probe on comparison bars in regard to:
- How do we best visually tell a story when in some cases a big number is good and in other cases a big number is bad? (Show them the example where the lower fuel consumption number is better and where the higher mpg is better.)

Ask client if they have any questions at this time.

### Environmental Metric (20 minutes)

**SHOW THEM THE CURRENT LABEL AND SHOW THEM THAT IT HAS COMPONENTS FOR MPG, FUEL COSTS, ETC. THEN EXPLAIN THAT WE ARE NOW GOING TO LOOK AT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS FOR A NEW LABEL SEPARATELY, BUT THAT IT MAY EVENTUALLY BE PART OF A TOTAL LABEL.**

24. Does the impact of driving on the environment affect the type of vehicle you purchase? Why or why not?
25. (Hand out the environmental metric work sheet and the individual copies of the designs. Show them the 4 options on large boards)
- Then instruct them to "indicate on your worksheet which option is most understandable and which is least understandable. For each choice write brief bullet points explaining why."
- Moderator then tallies rankings and opens up to discussion regarding reasons behind their choices. (Probe on which of the 4 options explains environmental impact most effectively? Test correct interpretation of metrics by asking what the metrics mean, if they are 'easy to understand'.)
26. Which of the four options would make you most likely to purchase a fuel efficient vehicle? Why?
27. Can you suggest other ways to express this information visually?

28. If this information was available on the label, would you use it in your decision about which vehicle to purchase? Why or why not? If so, at what point?
29. If it wasn't on the label, but you were directed to a web site for it, would you go to the website and use this information? Why or why not?
30. All of the options we showed you used the term "Environment". What does that mean to you? Do you think there is a better word to use? (Moderator to write suggestions on flip chart. Then open up to discussion regarding reasons behind their suggestions.)
31. All of the options also report on CO<sub>2</sub>, but not on other pollutants. Does the label need to include information on these other pollutants? Would you use that information in making your vehicle choice? Why or why not?
32. Moderator to point to the 'SmartWay' logo and ask them 'what is this?' (Probe on what they think it means.) Ask- 'if it was not on the label would that make you less likely to choose that vehicle.' Why or why not? (Note to moderator: SmartWay label refers to more than CO<sub>2</sub>.)

### **Range Metric (10 minutes)**

33. What do we mean by a vehicles range? When you think about your vehicle, do you think about its range?
34. Show them the 1 option on large board. Then ask if range affects their purchase decision. What if one vehicle had a range of 600 miles and another had a range of 300 miles, would that affect your choice of vehicle? Why or why not?
35. Can you suggest other ways to express this information visually?
36. If it wasn't on the label, but you were directed to a web site for it, would you go to the website and use this information? Why or why not?

### **Overall Label Design Issues (15 minutes)**

37. How should we present the information we just discussed on a full label? Should some information be emphasized over other information? Moderator to use consumption, cost, and environment design choices most favored by the group to lead this discussion. Probe on:
  - relative importance of each metric
  - prominence
  - placement of information
  - use of graphical elements
  - use of color
  - importance of including the statement about the availability of the Fuel Economy Guide (show from current label).
38. If you could only have TWO items on the label what would they be? Why? (Probe on how those would influence their choice of the most fuel efficient vehicle.)

39. We have discussed a number of elements that could be on the label. Are there any other elements that we have not discussed that would influence you to buy a fuel efficient vehicle?

40. Other than the label, are there other methods that would be useful in providing the information we have been discussing? For example (show label code), if a code such as this were on every label and you could scan it with your phone camera and it could tell you about this vehicle, or you could scan multiple vehicle and compare them, would that be useful? Any others ideas that would be useful to assist you in choosing the most fuel efficient vehicle?

### **Wrap-Up (5 minutes)**

- Summarize findings from focus group and ask for confirmation of summarized findings.
- Is there information that we have not discussed today that would influence you to choose a fuel efficient vehicle?
- Anything else you would like our clients to know about you thoughts about fuel economy labels?

Ask client if they have any last questions.