



Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires

NHTSA Consumer Research Working Group

WebEx

March 30, 2010

Ray Tuvell

Manager, Fuel-Efficient Tire Program

California Energy Commission



Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires

North America Sales

- \$30 Billion Annually
- 190 Million Passenger Tires Replaced in 2009
- Readily Available, Reliable, Objective Consumer Information?





Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires

Establish Program Goals

- Empower the Marketplace
- Stimulate Competition: Manufacturers and Retailers
- Encourage and Reward Technological Advancement



Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires

Evaluate NHTSA's Existing Consumer Information Program for Tires

“Uniform Tire Quality Grading System”
(UTQG)

- o Universally Panned as Unreliable
- o Rarely Used by Professionals or Informed Consumers
- o What Went Wrong and Why?
- o Don't Repeat Past Mistakes!!



Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires

UTQG Shortcomings

- Grades Not Easily Understood:
 - Indexes (A, B, C, etc.) Require Detailed Knowledge
- Grades Not Reliable:
 - No Actual Tire Tests Required
 - Manufacturer Reports Only “Grade” No Actual Values
 - Grade is Manufacturer’s “Self Certification” Claim
 - Manufacturer May Claim a Lower Grade



Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires

Analyze Successful Consumer Information Programs

- Appliances: “Energy Guides”
- Food: “Nutrition Facts”
- Vehicles: “Fuel Economy Estimates”
- Energy Star



Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires

Identify the Elements of Success

- **Intuitive**
- **Relevant**
- **Objective**
- **Reliable**
- **Consistent**
- **Up-to-Date**
- **Readily Available**
- **Empowering**



Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires

Develop Practical Understanding of the Tire Sales/Purchase & Marketing Process

Conduct Direct Observations & Interviews

- Consumer Perspective
- Retailer/Sales Rep Perspective
- Manufacturer Perspective



Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires





Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires





Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires





Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires





Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires





Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires





Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires

Typical Sales/Purchase Process

Sales Rep:

- What is the year, make & model of your vehicle?
- I have three different tires in stock that will fit your vehicle:
 - Low Price
 - Mid Price – On Special Sale Today
 - High Price



Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires

Tire Store Observations & Interviews

- Consumers:
 - “Need Tires Now”
 - Few “Planned” Purchases
- Dealer Perspective of Consumers:
 - 90% Know Nothing About Tires
 - 10% Do Research



Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires

Tire Dealer & Consumer Roundtable

- Tire Dealers:

Keep it Simple

- Consumer Representatives:

Presentation to Consumer has to be Intuitive

- CEC Conclusions:

Consumers are at the Mercy of the Sales Rep
Tire Marketplace is a “Crap Shoot”



Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires

Transform the Tire Marketplace

Empower Consumers

- Tires are expensive, I want tires that will last
- I want my vehicle to stop quickly
- Fuel efficiency is important to me
- I want a tire that doesn't require frequent inflation

Empower Sales Rep

- This is a long-life tire
- This is a quick stopping tire
- This is a fuel efficient tire
- This is a low maintenance tire



Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires

The “Core Term” Approach

Core Terms - Nutrition

- “Low Calorie”
 - Max 4 calories per gram
- “Low Fat”
 - < 3 gram per serving
- “Sodium Free”
 - < 5 mg per serving

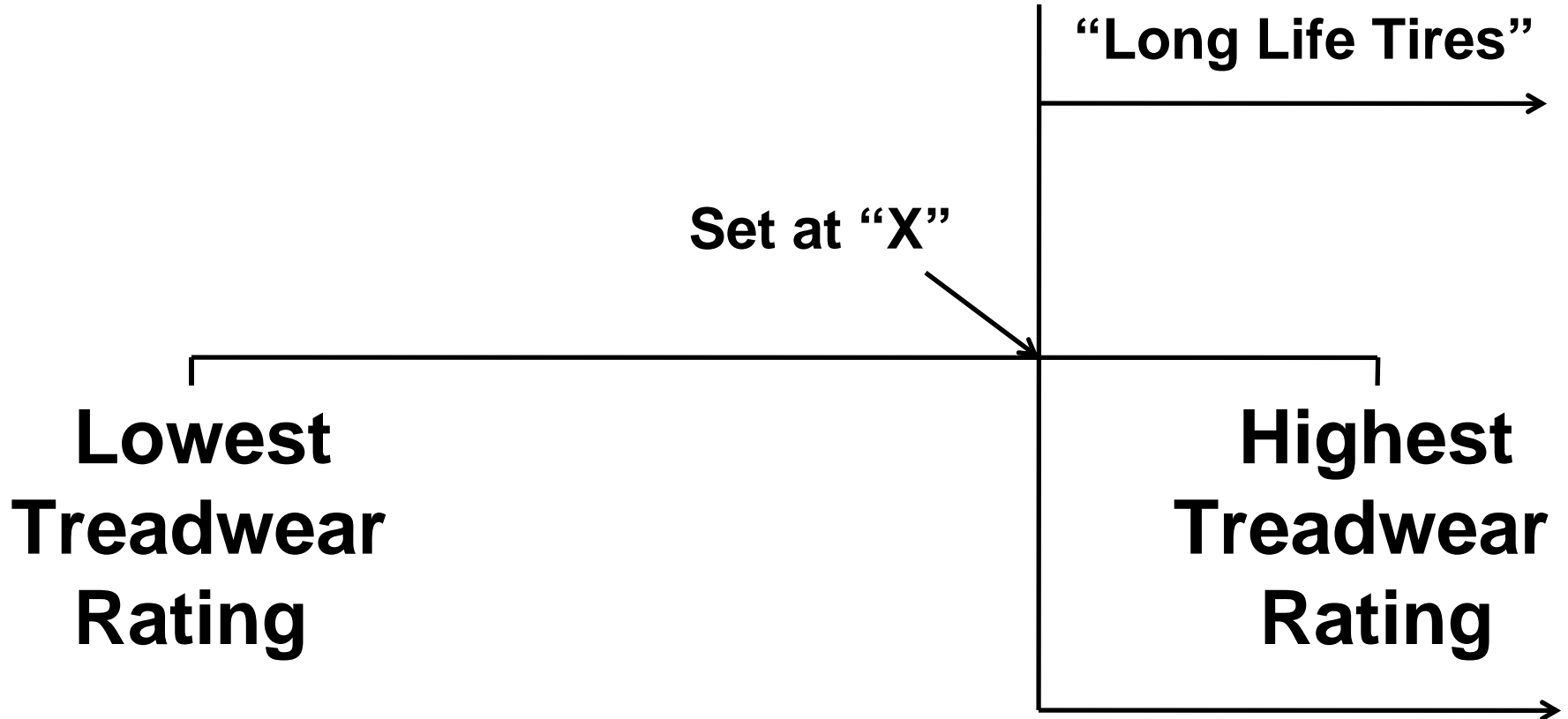
Core Terms - Tires

- Long Life (Durability)
- Quick Stopping (Safety)
- Fuel Efficient
- Low Maintenance



Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires

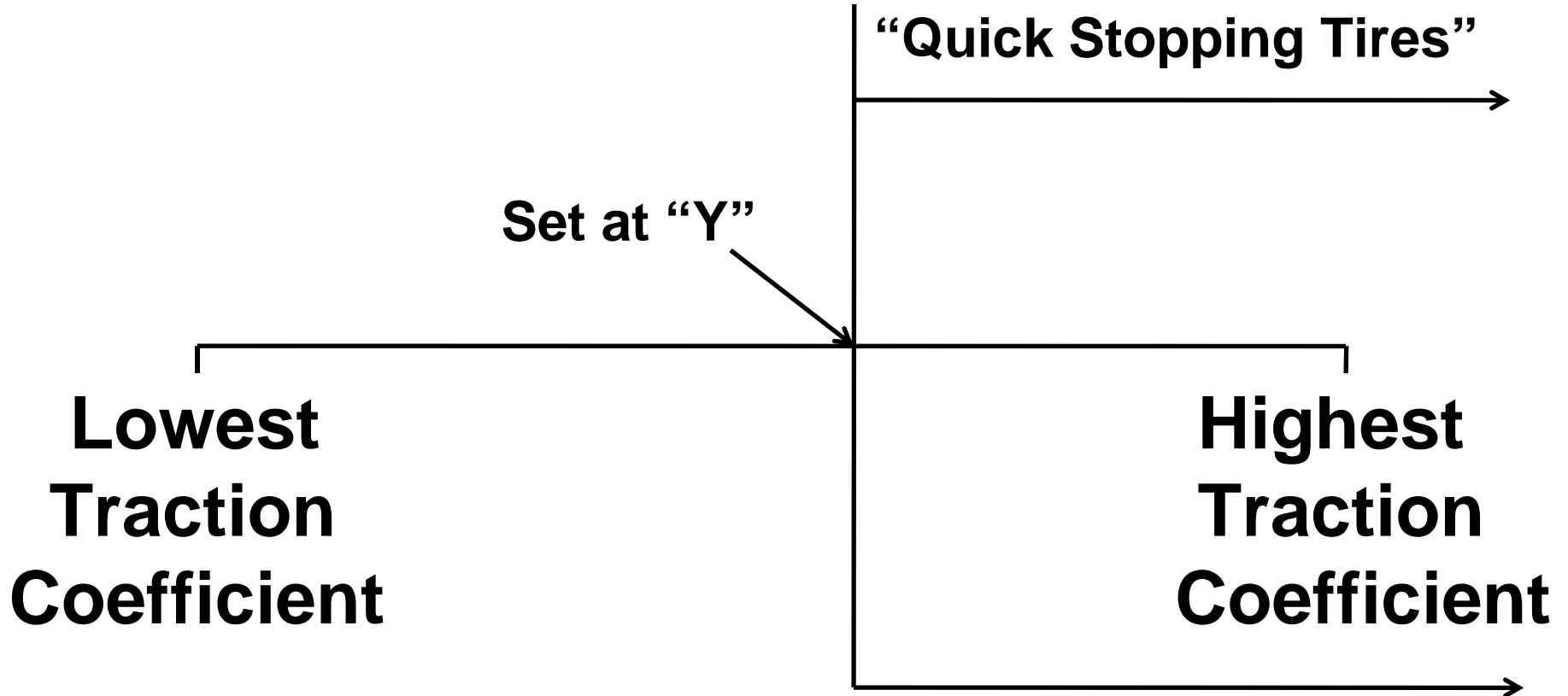
Core Terms for Tires – Long Life





Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires

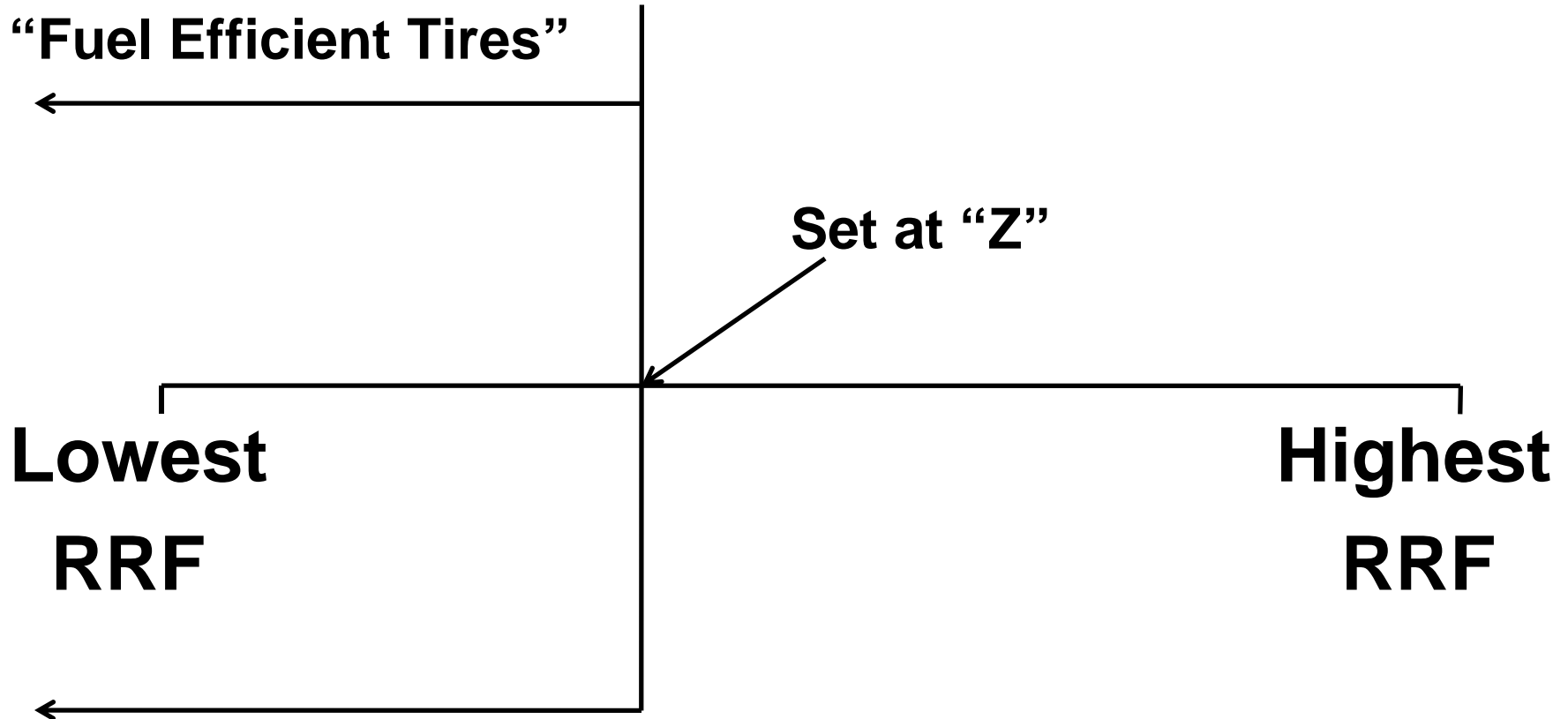
Core Terms for Tires – Quick Stopping





Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires

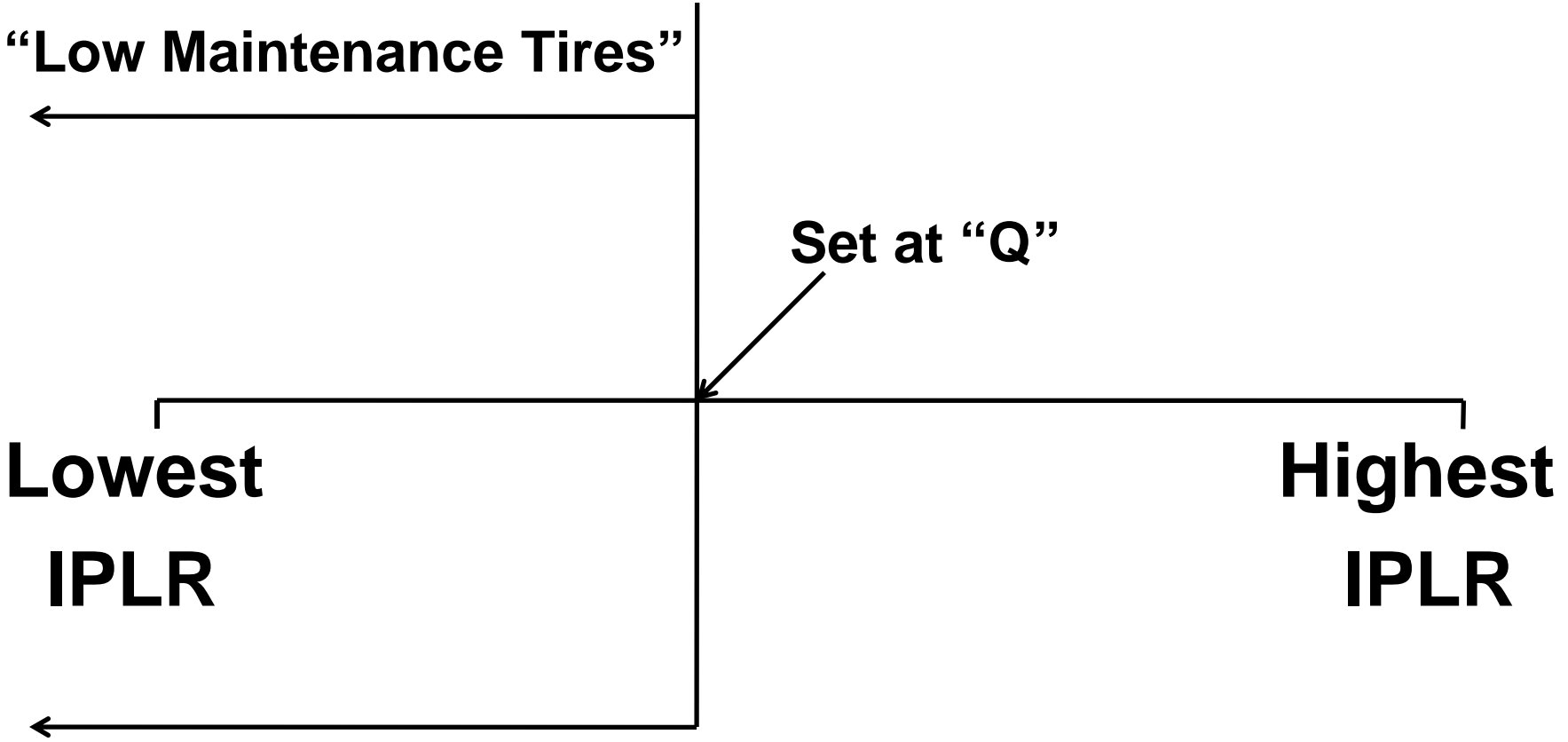
Core Terms for Tires – Fuel Efficient





Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires

Core Terms for Tires – Low Maintenance





Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires

Tires With All Four:

- Long Life
- Quick Stopping
- Fuel Efficient
- Low Maintenance



Ask for Energy Star Tires



Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires

Multifaceted Consumer Information Program

- Comprehensive Database
- Rating/Ranking System
- Core Terms
- Tools:
 - Searchable, Interactive Websites
 - Calculators – Life-Cycle Costs, Fuel Savings
 - Internet Learning Center with FAQs



Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires

Labels on Tires??





Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires

Labels on Tires??

- Of Value to Consumers?
 - Will Consumers Actually See/Look at Labels on Tires?
- Of Value to Wholesalers or Retailers?
- What's on the Label?
- Mandatory?
- Optional?



Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires



2% Improvement in
National Fuel Efficiency =

- 3 Billion Gallons/Year Fuel Savings
- \$9 Billion/Year Fuel Savings
- 33 MMT/Year CO₂ Reduction



Consumer Information Program for Passenger Tires

What Can California Do To Help?

Ray Tuvell

Manager, Fuel-Efficient Tire Program
California Energy Commission

rtuvell@energy.state.ca.us