

# Fuel Awards Given as Kyoto Pact Dawns



Gerry Malloy – Toronto Star, February 19, 2005

Canadian drivers must learn to conserve energy, Natural Resources Canada officials said Wednesday, the day the controversial **Kyoto Protocol** went into effect. The pact is a mutual commitment by 140 nations to significantly reduce the world's output of "greenhouse gas" (GHG) emissions. Excessive production of GHGs from human activity is widely believed to be a contributor to global climate change, which threatens to have disastrous consequences in the decades ahead if left unchecked. As a signatory to that protocol, Canada has committed to reduce its GHG emissions 6 per cent from 1990 levels, averaged over the period 2008 through 2012.

One of the keys to achieving that goal will be a significant reduction in fuel consumption for transportation, which accounts for about 50 per cent of our CO<sub>2</sub> (carbon dioxide) production as individuals, Natural Resources Canada says. CO<sub>2</sub>, the most prevalent of all greenhouse gases, is a major by-product of fossil-fuel combustion. The exhaust from cars and light trucks is responsible for some 12 per cent of all Canada's annual GHG emissions. The relationship between driving and CO<sub>2</sub> production is direct. Within a small range of variation, the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> a vehicle produces is directly proportional to its fuel consumption.

Negotiations between Ottawa and the auto industry on voluntary new-vehicle GHG-emission standards have stalled over the extent of the reductions the government sought, which auto makers considered technically unfeasible, industry sources say. Whatever may result in terms of new-vehicle regulations, they will play only a small role in the overall picture.

To meet the Kyoto targets, said John Efford, Minister of Natural Resources Canada, every Canadian will have to reduce his or her GHG contribution by 20 per cent — or about one tonne per year. To encourage that action, the federal government last year initiated the **One-Tonne Challenge**, for which Rick Mercer has been a spokesperson.

Auto show visitors can take the challenge themselves, via on-site terminals, which will help them identify how to achieve that goal by changing their vehicle buying or driving habits. At the show, NRCan announced the winners of this year's *EnerGuide* awards, aimed at encouraging shoppers to choose the most fuel-efficient vehicles.

But you don't have to change vehicles to make a difference, note the advisers from Natural Resources Canada. Such simple steps as reducing your driving by 10 per cent can achieve up to half your one-tonne goal. Keeping your vehicle well maintained, reducing idle time — shut off the engine if you are stopped more than just 10 seconds — and ensuring all tires are properly inflated by checking pressures at least once a month can also help. So can slowing down. Typically, a vehicle consumes 20 per cent more fuel at 120 km/h than it does at 100 km/h. You can take the One Tonne Challenge online at [www.climatechange.gc.ca](http://www.climatechange.gc.ca)