

Comment from Matthew Hoyer

I would rather see more support for full electrification and education on how to properly adjust mirrors than a replacement of mirrors with cameras. Yes, the technology offers a superior view; however, as someone that works at a car dealer, backup cameras already have spotty reliability. Cameras fail all the time, reversing sensors fail about as often.

Additionally, they add expense upfront to the purchase of a vehicle, an expense that is doomed to repeat itself when the technology fails. A mirror can be replaced with a few dollars, whereas camera replacement will essentially mandate visiting a dealer for an expensive replacement part that needs to be married to the car's computer with software only available to said dealership. This is something that, unless the unlikely event that manufacturers agree to keep software open-source comes to pass, will hurt the bottom line of independent mechanics, who are already having issues with closed-source computer diagnostics.

Further, there's a lot of variables in the actual operation of camera systems that need to be accounted for. Are the camera lenses clean of debris? Are the transmitting wires working? Is the camera itself working? Is the screen it transmits to working properly? What electrical gremlins are going on in the system? A mirror just needs to A: exist, and B: be properly adjusted so as to see what you're doing.

Another option to better see what you're doing, improve sightlines, and improve pedestrian safety is to somehow encourage the sale of cars over light trucks. Despite all the increases in pedestrian safety brought by modern design, pedestrian fatalities have been on the rise over the past several years. Not only are drivers distracted by the technology around them, but they're also much more likely to drive a big, heavy light truck, the best-selling CAFE class of vehicle in the U.S., than they were even a decade or two ago. All that extra weight isn't something that can just be regulated away from an impact; you're still effectively hitting a person with a 2-ton-plus brick.

A solution that might solve a few of these issues (at least in part) is increasing the tax on consumer-grade fuel. If consumers have to pay more at the pump over a sustained length of time, then they should either start thinking of buying more fuel-efficient vehicles or buy an electric or hybrid car to eliminate those costs entirely. The additional tax on gas can be used to fund things like government grants for exceptionally fuel-efficient or electric vehicles, funding for repairs of public infrastructure, or both.

Our infrastructure has been crumbling due to lack of will to fund repairing it, especially here in Pennsylvania. Driving around Philadelphia is like trying to navigate a poverty-stricken third-world city, and that's not the sort of description you might expect for the wealthiest country in the world. Heavy light trucks cause exceptionally more wear and tear on roads than cars do, without significantly contributing more towards repairs. If the average fuel economy of America is to increase any more than it has, these sorts of suggestions are what will need to happen at some point.