

GM grounds large '16 crossovers with overstated EPA mileage labels

Inadvertent 'data transmission' discovered by engineers

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Mike Colias

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Bad label: Chevrolet's 2016 Traverse.

UPDATED: 5/13/16 3:55 pm ET - adds details, EPA statement

Editor's note: The fuel economy ratings on front-wheel drive versions of GM's 2016 large crossovers were incorrect in an earlier version of this story.

DETROIT -- General Motors instructed dealers to stop selling their entire inventory of about 60,000 Chevrolet Traverse, GMC Acadia and

Buick Enclave large crossovers as the company scrambles to replace incorrect EPA labels that overstate the vehicles' fuel-economy ratings.

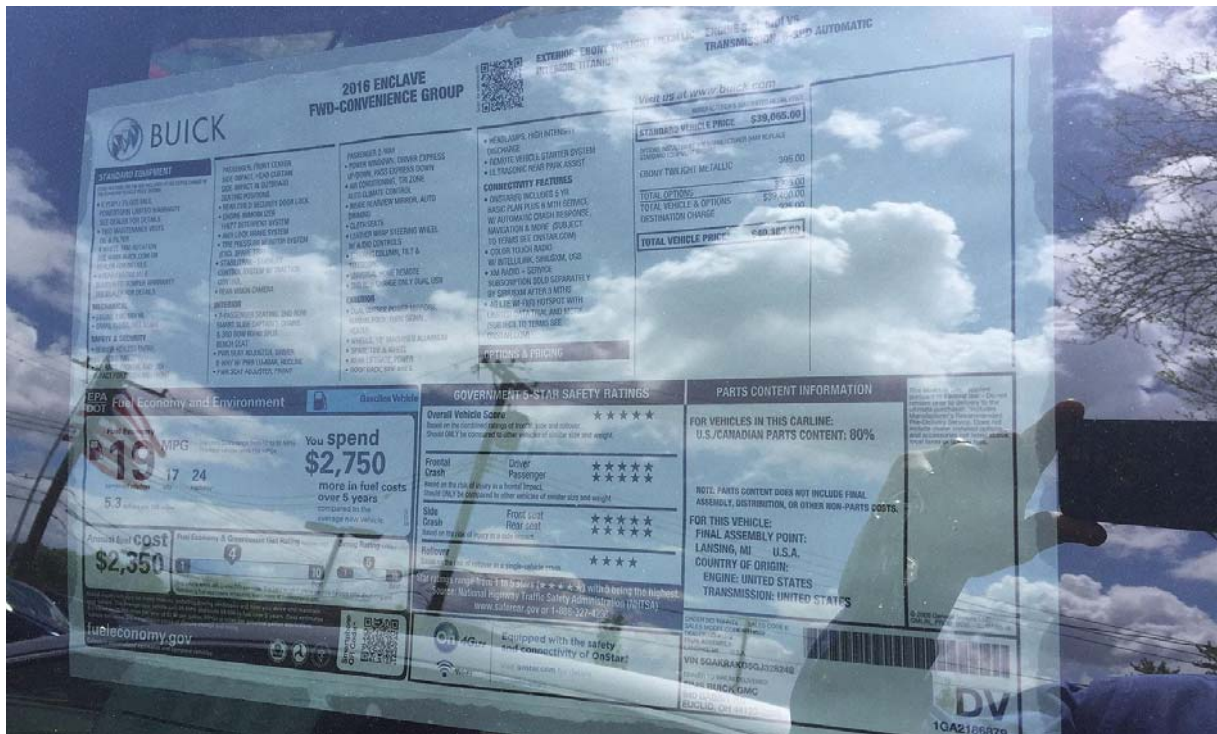
GM notified dealers Wednesday that an "inadvertent error" listed the EPA fuel economy ratings "as 1-2 MPG higher than it should have been," according to a memo sent to all U.S. Chevy, Buick and GMC dealers and obtained by *Automotive News*.

"GM is stopping sale of the affected models until a corrected label is printed and affixed," the memo reads. A document sent to dealers lists 59,823 vehicles that cannot be delivered to customers until they get the correct label.

A separate memo sent to dealers Friday said replacement labels should "start arriving at dealerships" on Saturday and that all of them should arrive by Tuesday. Known as the Monroney sticker, the label shows the EPA's official fuel-economy ratings for the vehicle, along with pricing and other information.

GM spokesman Tom Wilkinson confirmed that GM has grounded all '16 Traverse, Acadia and Enclave models. He said GM is working with its supplier to print and overnight labels to dealerships. He didn't provide a timeline for when they are expected to be delivered.

"We're working as quickly as possible to fix the problem and get the labels shipped," Wilkinson said. He said an inadvertent "data transmission" was responsible for the mistake.



A 2016 Buick Enclave with a window sticker showing incorrect EPA fuel economy ratings of 17 city, 24 highway and 19 combined. *Photo credit: RICHARD TRUETT*

The correct EPA ratings for all-wheel-drive models of all three crossovers are 15 mpg in city driving and 22 mpg on the highway for a combined rating of 17 mpg. The incorrect label showed 17 city, 24 highway and 19 combined.

The ratings for front-wheel-drive models -- 15 city, 22 highway and 18 combined -- also were mislabeled.

Wilkinson said GM notified the EPA as soon as it discovered the error and is in discussions with the agency on the handling of the matter.

In a statement to *Automotive News*, the EPA confirmed that GM notified the agency that it “is correcting fuel economy labels” on

the crossovers. “We have asked the company to provide all relevant information to the agency,” it said.

Tens of thousands more of the crossovers were purchased by customers with the erroneous labels since the '16 models went on sale last fall, Wilkinson confirmed. He said GM will notify customers of the error and send them corrected labels. The company is sorting through its plan to address any customer complaints that might arise.

It's unclear whether GM could face government fines or penalties because of the error.

Through April this year, GM dealers sold 39,105 Traverses, 17,457 Enclaves and 25,575 Acadias, according to the Automotive News Data Center. The bulk of those likely were '16 models, but the total would also include '15s.

Wilkinson said that changes were made to the crossovers between the '15 and '16 model years that resulted in new EPA ratings, even though the 3.6-liter engine and six-speed automatic transmission carried over. He said he couldn't detail what those changes were. GM told dealers in the initial memo that the error was discovered

by company engineers as they worked on the Monroney label for the 2017 model year.

GM also is advising dealers to correct or remove any marketing materials, including showroom vehicle-information booklets, that show the incorrect fuel economy figures.