

British government urged to use Jaguars

A group of British MPs are urging their government to use Tata-owned luxury Jaguar cars instead of Japanese hybrid cars that run on a mix of electricity and petrol.

The campaign that could be summed up as 'be British, drive British' follows Tata Motors' acquisition of Jaguar and Land Rover in April and its plans to inject about 700 million pounds (\$1.4 billion) for research and development.

The British government, in order to honour its international agreements to cut carbon emission, follows a policy of favouring Toyota Prius and Hondo Civic Hybrid for its fleet of cars.

But cross-party group of MPs led by Sion Simon from the region around the city of Birmingham - home to Jaguar factories - say the government has a duty to buy Jaguars, which they say are environmentally friendly despite their luxury status.

They favour the Jaguar XJ 2.7 diesel, which recently won the title of Britain's greenest luxury car in the 2008 Car Buyers' Guide from the Environmental Transport Association.

The MPs say Japanese hybrid cars are less green than they are made out to be since their environmental audit does not take into account the fact that they are shipped all the way from Japan.

They also say the complex manufacturing process requires nickel to be mined for use in the batteries.

In an early day motion in the British parliament last week, the MPs said the Jaguar XJ 2.7 Diesel is capable of achieving more than 1,000 miles (1,600 km) on a single tank of fuel, the average fuel consumption hitting 53.5 miles per gallon (around 18 km per litre).

The motion highlights Jaguar Land Rover's 'commitment to delivering carbon dioxide and fuel consumption reductions to customers through development of industry-leading diesel engines and application of advanced lightweight aluminium vehicle architectures'.

It urges the government to take 'full account of the environmental advances and the reduced carbon footprint of products of UK-based carmakers when making decisions on Ministerial cars'.

According to reports, 53 of the 84 cars in the British government's ministerial fleet are Japanese hybrid vehicles. There are only 10 Jaguars.

British Finance Minister Alistair Darling told the local Birmingham Post newspaper that he was aware of the investment put into Jaguar Land Rover by Tata Motors but refused to back the campaign for Jaguars.

'I think the main thing is to encourage all manufacturers whether here or anywhere else to manufacture cars which are as efficient as possible, both for economic and environmental reasons,' Darling told the paper.

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